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A typical shanty in a small clearing of the forest made by early settlers of the Mississippi region.

Department of Energy and Resources Management

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**mississippi
valley
conservation
report
1970
history**



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Chapter 1

THE INDIAN AND FRENCH PERIOD

Local lore has it that Bon Echo Rock on Lake Mazinaw was a great rendezvous point for Indian bands long before European settlement reached the Mississippi valley. The Indian names Mazinaw, Mishinog and Massanoga (used practically interchangeably until recently) mean "a place of meeting" in Iroquoian (Mohawk) and Algonkin (Ojibwa - Mississauga) dialects, and Indian paintings just above water level on the Rock, although still not deciphered, add some validity to the contention.

Certainly there is no doubt that the Mississippi River, with the great rock near its headwaters, was well-known to both Iroquoian and Algonkin peoples, but although Indian remains and relics have been found at the head of the lake and farther north, as well as at several other places in the valley, the area as a whole lacks evidence of Indian settlement on the scale that occurred in other parts of southern Ontario. The few Mohawk families that lived on the Mazinaw and along the Mississippi within living memory were, for instance, newcomers to the area from Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence reserves, and not descendants of long-time Indian settlers.

This apparent dearth of Indian settlement within the past four centuries is not hard to explain. When, towards the middle of the 16th century, Jacques Cartier made his way up the St. Lawrence River to the future site of Montreal, he found a large Indian village (Hochelaga) which was almost certainly Huron (and therefore Iroquoian). The village was also identical to all intents and purposes with Huron and other Iroquois villages of the 17th century that are known to have existed in both east and west Ontario. Almost seven decades after Cartier's arrival, Samuel de Champlain found that Hochelaga no longer existed, and that the Montreal region was a staging ground for Montagnais and Algonkin expeditions against the Iroquois nations of today's New York State.

The suggestion is that the Hurons, who in the 17th century were concentrated in western Ontario, had been driven away by their enemies. Sometimes it is also assumed that Iroquoian power extended much farther northward in the decades period to Champlain's arrival, while yet other theories have had Iroquoian peoples as newcomers to the St. Lawrence region, almost coinciding with the coming of the Europeans.

During the past 20 years, however, the researches of specialists in Indian and archaeological studies have suggested that Iroquoian peoples had been established in the area for an indeterminate period of time, and that there had been at least half a dozen cultural sequences from 1,000 A.D. to the European period. In this view the migration of tribes and bands over greater and lesser distances within the given area, and the continuing development of sub-cultures or focuses, is incidental to a process which probably began some three thousand years ago with the first rudimentary attempts at agriculture.

By the time the French began to explore up the St. Lawrence, Iroquoian agriculture had so far advanced that it was not unusual for villages

— frequently palisaded and containing sometimes upwards of fifty long houses — to be surrounded by fields of maize that stretched for miles. This was the main crop, but beans, squashes, sunflower and tobacco were also cultivated extensively and stored in both underground and above ground caches for use during the winter. Animals of the forest were supplementary food sources, and there were practically none of them that the Indian would not eat through choice as well as necessity. At one of the oldest uncovered sites in eastern Ontario, some miles above the St. Lawrence, animal bones from refuse heaps included those of deer, beaver, dog, bear, raccoon, marten, muskrat, porcupine, otter, woodchuck, hare, squirrel, moose, wolf, skunk, fox, wolverine and bison.

Whatever may have been the case in earlier times, Iroquoians did not inhabit the Mississippi region from the end of the 16th century. They certainly passed through and hunted in the area, however, and did so increasingly after the first decade of the 17th century when the Dutch began to supply the nations of the Iroquois confederacy with weapons. Such small settlement as there might have been at that time would have been Algonkin, and the tribes and bands belonging to this group were nomadic. Although it was common practice for them to imitate Iroquoian agricultural methods, they lived in transportable wigwams and consequently their traces were soon covered when they moved on. Unlike Iroquoians, who remained for from ten to 50 years in a place before exhausting the land's fertility, Algonkins travelled as their fancy and search for food dictated. In this they were aided by their use of the birch-bark canoe which was considered from Champlain's time as superior to the hollowed out tree trunks favoured by the Iroquois. The mobility permitted by the wigwam and the birchbark canoe impressed Champlain during his first days in the intended new colony, when overnight a village of nearly a thousand Algonkin peoples removed itself from one river bank to another to be near his trading post.

The Algonkins proper, as distinct from other tribes speaking group dialects, were then masters of the Ottawa River and are known to have inhabited some of its tributaries. In 1610, Etienne Brûlé, a young protégé of Champlain's, was sent to spend a year with Algonkins who had a settlement apparently somewhere in the region of today's Hawkesbury. So adept did Brûlé become at Indian life that he eventually traversed much of the eastern part of the continent with one group and another, reaching as far south as Florida on one occasion. He was, however, no chronicler of his travels. All that can be said is that he likely visited the Mississippi in 1610-11, particularly as the Algonkin chief, Iroquet, to whom he was entrusted, seems from Champlain's descriptions to have travelled frequently and almost at will from Georgian Bay to the Lachine Rapids and south to the St. Lawrence River. The following year another young Frenchman from a rival fur-trading firm went, with Champlain's blessings, to stay with Iroquet; but he, like Brûlé and countless other coureurs de bois who followed years afterwards, left no record of what they did and saw in territories which must have included the Mississippi valley.

It was in 1613 that Champlain, as conscientious with the pen as the others were not, made his first journey up the Ottawa River. At the start he noted that "[t]he surrounding country is filled with great forest," and, significantly, his party of five built a barricade for the night and maintained a watch in case of sudden attack by Iroquois. At Hawkesbury he met a

number of Algonkins who suggested that he discontinue his journey because "[t]he way is bad," but provided him with a guide when he insisted that his mind was made up. On the ninth day out, the party came to Lac Deschênes after a rough portage from the Chaudière Falls. The forest was by then so nearly impenetrable that Champlain decided to carry only what was immediately required and cached most of his supplies. There was certainly no indication of human habitation from Lac Deschênes to the Chats, the northern shore line of today's Mississippi Valley Authority. Two days, and more than 30 miles, later, they did come across a band of Algonkins cultivating the land alongside Muskrat Lake, but a more impressive agriculture was found on regaining the Ottawa and the territory of the Allumette Algonkins. On Morrison Island Champlain found not only pumpkins and beans being grown but also French peas that were without doubt some of the first ever in Ontario.

Two years after, when Champlain again went up the Ottawa, the fear of raiding Iroquois, intent upon intercepting the fur-carrying Hurons and Algonkins and making off with their gains to the Dutch in New York, was even greater. On the lower Ottawa River the Algonkins moved so fast that their French companions could barely keep up with them, and it was not until near Pembroke that they felt themselves safe. This remained the pattern, with slight respites, for decades to come, as the Iroquois tribes, armed with harquebuses and steel hatchets and knives instead of stone ones, crossed the St. Lawrence in increasing numbers and established settlements along the north shore and above Lake Ontario. The southern tributaries of the Ottawa River, including the Mississippi, became virtually impassable to all but the most adventurous Algonkins, and the whole territory between the two great rivers became known to Europeans as the hunting grounds of the Iroquois. There were undoubtedly skirmishes, and there is even a local legend of a great battle at the narrows on Mazinaw Lake, but it is no more than a legend. The rewards were obviously great, for even in Champlain's time upwards of twenty thousand beaver skins were shipped to France annually. After 1650, Iroquoian domination extended to Georgian Bay and beyond, and above the Ottawa River, and Hurons and Algonkins alike retreated northwestwards towards Manitoba or northeastwards to the protection of the French. The Jesuit missionaries complained frequently of the manner in which Iroquois warriors — numbering hundreds rather than thousands — "infested" hundreds of miles of territory. This remained the case for more than a hundred years. Maps made just before and after the end of French rule — those by de Vaugondy, and Bowen and Gibson, for instance — show the Iroquois du Nord firmly established above Lake Ontario, and contain such notations as: "The Iroquois have possessed all the Country between the Lakes ever since 1650 on their expelling the Antient Hurons."

Then, practically coinciding with the first British occupation, the situation changed rapidly. The Ojibwa Mississaugas from the area of Manitoulin Island, who were gatherers of wild rice, berries and maple syrup, reversed the positions of hunter and hunted and within a matter of years drove the Iroquois from Lake Huron and back to Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, married with their captives and took over, in the words of their head chief in 1904, " ... the land they had conquered from the Mohawks ... full of game and an excellent hunting ground ... and settled permanently."

It was from this time, the end of the 18th century, that tribal fighting virtually ended in the areas contiguous to the Mississippi valley, and thereafter both Ojibwa and Iroquoian dialects were commonly spoken. The British, for the time being, considered the territory simply as wilderness.

Chapter 2

SETTLEMENT BEGINS

It was in the aftermath of the War of 1812 that the British authorities decided that a serious effort would have to be made at settling the lower Ottawa River and its tributaries. Although they had long been aware of the vulnerability of the St. Lawrence route to American attack, and Governor Haldimand had planned as long before as 1783 on settling persons as far west as what became the townships of Bathurst and Dalhousie, none of the settlement projects seemed feasible while Loyalists and other immigrants preferred the line of townships along the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario. However, a number of grants were given at the turn of the 19th century and some persons did go north to settle. But apart from a little lumbering just prior to the war — chiefly by Philemon Wright who had established a small community at Hull on the Ottawa's north shore —, there was no real activity in the Mississippi Valley and surrounding districts.

Upper Canada, young and poor as it was, was in no condition to finance settlement schemes itself. Consequently, the decision to extend the colony's line of defence and help in its development was taken in London with the adoption of "Rideau military settlements" as government support projects. Settlers, many of them from regiments disbanded in Canada after 1815, and others veterans of Britain's wars with Napoleon that ended at the same time, were given grants in Sherbrooke, Bathurst, Drummond, Beckwith, and Goulbourn, all of which were amongst the first townships surveyed between 1816 and 1818.*

The operation was, from the start, anything but a smooth one. The area was considered to be owned by the Mississaugas, but the Indian agent at Kingston, Captain John Ferguson, did not receive his instructions by way of Lieutenant-Governor Gore until February, 1816. They were to "communicate . . . by wampum to the chiefs of the Chippewa and Missesawguay Nations, . . . previous to your making a provisional agreement with them, that the King, their great Father, will make an establishment" on land which was described as being "four or five townships in the rear of those mentioned in the margin" of the instructions, i.e., Crosby, Burgess, Elmsley, Montague and Marlborough townships. The new townships became Bathurst, Drummond and Beckwith.

In another three years, an agreement was concluded by Captain Ferguson, on the Crown's behalf, whereby the "Principal Men of the Mississauga Nation" gave over the eastern parts of Renfrew and Carleton counties, and all but a few slivers of land in Lanark along the Rideau River, in return for "an annuity of £642.10s. provincial currency, in goods at the Montreal price."

* The details of the first settlements, centred on Perth and Richmond, are part of the story of the neighbouring Rideau Conservation Authority, and therefore not of concern here.

The surveying, too, as was almost always the case when the first Upper Canadian townships were laid out, was regarded as inadequate. Sherbrooke, Bathurst, Drummond, Beckwith and Goulbourn had their lines drawn from east to west, to conform with those of the two lower, and earlier, tiers of townships. But not so with Nepean and Gloucester. Their lines were drawn north and south from the Ottawa River. Later, other townships were surveyed both from north to south and from east to west and concession lines sometimes seemed to follow a course of their own. It all seemed to bear out the comments of Robert Gourlay, a well-known chronicler of administrative follies of the time, who wrote in 1817 of surveyors in general that "such a mess did they make of their land measuring that one of the present surveyors informed me that in running lines over a great extent of the province, he found room for a whole township."

The time taken for surveying, while would-be settlers camped out in the forest, or in whatever dry place they could find, was also the cause of much bitterness between the surveyors and the supervisors of the 'military settlements'. A reading of relevant correspondence suggests that technical difficulties rather than malpractices were at fault here. Certainly the settlement of several hundred persons in what had been a wilderness was no mean task, and the surveyors could hardly be held responsible for the condition of lands that sometimes were arable and other times proved so swampy that the settler immediately left the district altogether.

These early surveys revealed a great variety of soils. In Beckwith, there were clay, sand, gravel and rock. In Drummond, as Reuben Sherwood, who was responsible for the first surveys in the eastern section of the Mississippi townships, noted in 1817, "the Land ... appears to be more Swampy," with evidence of beavers having been at work, although there was "yet a proportion of good land therein." Bathurst he found more stony, but with a fair share of damp places.

Northwards the land, settled, as will be seen, after 1820 by new arrivals from Scotland and Ireland, steadily deteriorated in quality, although it was amply covered with pine, maple, ash, beech and cedar. By the end of 1822, Sherwood had, too, the northern section of townships surveyed and roughly classified. Lavant he "deemed a rough stoney and broken Township, comprising but a small portion of good land." Its higher parts had heavy hardwood growths " ... such as maple, beech, black oak, ash, Ironwood and some bass. ..." while its several lakes, and the shores of the Clyde, had an abundance of white and red (Norway) pine with an admixture of hemlock, birch and cedar. All too frequently, he noticed, Lavant's rocky hills terminated in swamp and marsh, although looking on the bright side he thought it worth mentioning that the best swamps grew good ash and cedar "which answer well for Railing." By the same token there were fish of all kinds to be had, and "many good mill seats" with, however, the drawback of being far from navigable waters. As the township could obviously never be made to grow grain crops, he suggested that "the first cultivators. ... resort to Potash making" (then one of Canada's great exports) and, with the trees cleared, make Lavant "a grazing Township."

Sherwood found Darling very similar in land and timber to Lavant, but with much larger white and red pine in places, some of which had already been cut and taken to Quebec by way of White Lake and the Ottawa River.

Pakenham too was much the same, but it had beaver ponds "on every stream and beavers in them," and although well timbered it had lost great quantities of white and red pine to the Quebec trade.

Sherwood considered Fitzroy, despite its frequent stretches of broken and swampy land, to have "more good land than either of the other [Lavant and Darling] Townships," and so far as the situation went it "exceeds the whole," for it had the outlets of both the Mississippi and the Carp Rivers and the Chats rapids which he thought ideal for mill sites. In 1822, one hundred acres of land had already been cleared at Fitzroy Harbour and several buildings had been erected. It was here that the lumbering rafts were fitted for the journey down the Ottawa River.

The final township in this range, Torbolton, had "very fine land" where it adjoined Fitzroy on the western side, but elsewhere was "very much broken" and subject to severe flooding in the spring from Constance Creek. There were sizeable quantities of white pine, but they did not grow to the extent of the stands to the west.

Other descriptions tell of the two other townships east of the Mississippi, March and Huntley, having a variety of timber, with pine, hemlock and cedar being the predominant softwoods, and elm, ash and beech the hardwoods. Much of the pine, however, was considered not to be of good quality. In March most of the good land was found at the base of rock formations, but in Huntley the land alongside the Carp was thought the best once it had been drained. To the south there was a good deal of swampy land with, however, a rock bottom.

Despite a frequent rough and uneven appearance, the land was, all in all, equal to the expectations of most of the serious settlers, and this they were not slow in communicating to relatives and friends in Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland there was serious depression as wages of weavers and labourers sank to as little as one-fifth of what they had been at the turn of the century. In Ireland, the 1821 potato crop failure meant loss of existence itself to Irishmen.

Chapter 3

THE "RIDEAU SETTLEMENTS"

Due to increasing costs and requests for support — as well as the other problems which followed on the establishment of "military settlements" such as crop failures and the inability to become self-supporting soon enough — , the British government quickly tightened its emigration regulations.

Emigrants would no longer receive free passages nor would they be given grants of land unless they had some means of support and were willing to leave Britain by June 1st each year in order to start clearing before winter set in.

Circumstances, nonetheless, dictated the terms and, after the great suffering in the weaving districts of Lanarkshire, Scotland, emigration was publicly discussed in the British Parliament in 1819 and 1820 and it was decided to help those who would help themselves. A number of emigration societies were set up — the Glasgow, Bridgetown TransAtlantic, Abercrombie, Bridgetown Canadian, Muslin Street, Abercrombie Street, TransAtlantic, Lesmahagow, and Anderson and Rutherglen — by voluntary contribution, and it was to these that would-be emigrants applied for assistance. The British government added its support, supplying transport and provisions and advancing money (to be repaid within two years) to supplement the societies' resources.

With the "Rideau settlements" as destination for most, approximately a thousand persons left Scotland and crossed the Atlantic in June, 1820, on the ships Commerce and Prompt. Over one hundred more soon followed, after a further £500 had been raised by subscription in London.

Reuben Sherwood had by this time substantially completed his first surveys of Lanark, Dalhousie, Ramsay, Huntley and Sherbrooke, so that after the settlers' journey up the St. Lawrence River from Quebec, and from Brockville and Prescott to Perth, where a new road now led through the wilderness to Lanark, the new group needed to waste little time in reaching their locations.

Some, however, stayed in Perth for the time being. Once at Lanark, they came under the superintendence of Colonel William Marshall, supported by James Shaw and John Murdock, all three of whom were themselves recent settlers at Perth. A temporary office and store had been built in Lanark, and from here advances of money were made and implements distributed. According to the returns completed in the spring of 1821 by Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Cockburn, the Assistant Quartermaster-General of the forces in Canada, 167 men, 134 women and 532 children, or 833 persons from 167 families, "under particular instructions from His Majesty's Government ... were placed on Land at Lanark in the Military Settlement."

Each of the men was issued a felling axe, a pick-axe, a hammer, two files, a flanders kettle, a frying pan, two gimlets, a reaping hook, a bill hook, a broad hoe, a narrow hoe, two sets of hinges and a special set of iron hinges, a latch and lock with key, a pitchfork, a set saw, a hand saw, a

spade and a scythe. A total of 1,503 harrow teeth, 2,595 pounds of nails, and 569 blankets were also given out. At that time, the total expenses of settlement were £11,832.11s. 1-1/4d., including £533.15s.6d. paid as salaries to Marshall, Murdock and Shaw.

Murdock, whose official position was Issuer of Stores, wrote many decades later for the Almonte Gazette, that the store was a "large log house ... erected on the west bank of the river [Clyde] where the village of Lanark now is and the rude structure formed the centre of the settlement." The "few" blankets and "some axes and implements" provided by government were, as he then remembered, "of a worthless character," but "fortunately" a number of persons from earlier settlements moved northwards to the new townships and taught "the Scotch settlers the proper kinds of axes to use, and how to fell the trees to advantage with the tops as much together as possible in order to avoid the necessity of piling the brush." Also assisting the newcomers was a stranger by the name of Church who "had wandered into the new settlement bringing with him an excellent rifle and ... shot scores of deer which he distributed in a most liberal manner." Hardships were eased there, as the shanties which the settlers put up throughout Lanark and Dalhousie in the summer of 1820 were "by no means uncomfortable" as living places during the first years. Murdock further reported that:

The walls of the rude lodges were of logs, the roofs were made of basswood troughs, and the spaces between the logs were stuffed with moss or plastered with clay. The lower portion of the chimneys was built of stone; the upper part was of pieces of split cedar, something like lathe, and plastered on the inside with clay. The fire was composed of several logs.... An iron bar was extended near the fire ... to support the post used for cooking. Baking was done in metal ovens that each held a loaf of bread and in these flat pots meat could also be roasted. Hot coals were placed under the oven, and hot coals covered the lid ... the fire was not permitted to go out during the cold season, and afforded the only light available during the long winter night when the wolves were howling in the woods.

Lord Dalhousie, who arrived in Canada as Governor-General in 1820, made it his "first duty" to inspect the "military settlements" and found the Lanark settlement in its first days a very happy one:

Several townships had been surveyed last year in preparation for settlers, and every man is obliged to sit down on the lot as assigned to him. I never saw people in more joyous spirit, or more elated in their prospect.... It is an expensive job to Government, but it will do much good in more ways than one.

Certainly Lanark, by comparison with the first Perth settlement, was a very orderly operation. The settlers sponsored by the Lesmahagow society for instance were, as one of them wrote, "settled in the course of a few days." The writer, who was situated between the Clyde and the Mississippi, further disclosed:

[I am] well pleased with my land. It is nearly covered with sugar maple. I suppose I have 4,000 sugar trees and a great

deal of beech and ash, and a few cedars. I saw twenty fir. I have a small swamp for grass and a fine beaver meadow.

By the end of the first year, 1820, Colonel Marshall was able to report that the Lanark Village subdivisions had been laid out and that apart from his own house and the government store, there were "three respectable merchant stores and a dozen houses," a grist mill underway on the Clyde River which would be completed by Alexander Ferguson in the next year, and a sawmill soon to follow.

In the spring of 1821, the reports having been so optimistic, the Commerce sailed again from Greenock, together with the George Canning, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and the David of London, carrying among them 1,883 more emigrants for the Lanark settlement. It took, according to the "Narrative" of John McDonald, "a long time to carry ... baggage along a road of 74 miles to New Lanark" from Prescott, and he for one did not find that reality equalled the impressions of the previous year's settlers.

McDonald found the forest so dense that the sun could hardly penetrate. "Nature seems as if dead," he wrote, adding that the only signs of animal life were squirrels and "the unwholesome intrusion of oxen and cows, which, straying from their owners, came close to our tents ... [and] swine [which] would come to our very heads and take away anything they could find."

The land, too, was not altogether what he had hoped for, although for this there was this explanation:

Many of those who arrived first got the best lots, as they had the first choice, and if not pleased with it when viewed, Colonel Marshall still indulged them with more tickets for other lots till they were satisfied.... On this account inferior or worse lots are left to those who follow.

Pessimist though he was, McDonald in some ways anticipated the later observations of a provincial inspector who, while admitting that there was "a vein of good land consisting of the townships of Fitzroy, eastern part of Ramsay, Drummond, and part of Bathurst," found that the "western part of Ramsay, Lanark, Dalhousie, the northern part of Bathurst, Sherbrooke, Lavant, etc. is little else than a continued succession of rocky knolls or ridges with scraps of good land between," and expressed "surprise how the people managed to obtain a livelihood here."

Eventually, after a generation of settlement and, at times, lively dispute, it was decided that there were reasonable grounds for permitting the original grants of money by government to go unpaid.

With most of the worthwhile land in the other eastern group of townships taken up by Scottish immigrants and by persons who had made their own way either from the British Isles or from other parts of Canada, or even from the United States, Irish immigrants who arrived in 1823 were largely restricted to Ramsay, Huntley and Pakenham townships.

The new immigrants were part of a settlement scheme which, under the auspices of the British government, was designed both to alleviate suffering in Ireland from the potato famine by reducing the number of mouths to feed, and to help populate Upper Canada. This scheme, like others, had its own particular conditions. Applicants for land grants had to have character references and to be between 18 and 45 years of age. Those accepted were given free transport from Ireland to the Lanark townships where they were provided with 70 acres of land and an option on an additional 30 acres after ten years. During this time, nominal rent payments were required.

In July, 1823, 568 persons left Ireland aboard the Hebe and the Stakesby; in September, with ten deaths during passage, 558 arrived at Prescott in Upper Canada.

The settlers were led by Peter Robinson, a former Commissioner of Crown Lands who was the superintendent of the settlement scheme. He preceded the others from Prescott to the future site of Almonte. There Robinson established a government store which was soon provisioned with food and medical supplies and stacked with the usual settlers' implements.

Upon arrival, each family was given a cow and quantities of serge, flannel and leather. As many of the settlers were former labourers, weavers, specialized craftsmen, or familiar only with the open field agriculture of Ireland, they had to be shown how to use an axe in the forest and to be helped with the construction of their log cabins.

By the beginning of December, 1823, Robinson had the new immigrants settled well enough that he was able to turn over responsibility for the store to his clerk, Thomas Bain, and make his way back to England. Just over two years later, his report to the Colonial Department showed that Ramsay township had been the most successful place of settlement for the 1823 group. In 1826, the population of the township was 251, including 31 babies born there. By March, some 430 acres had been cleared and crops harvested of the Irishman's staple, potatoes, to the extent of 3,318 bushels, as well as 7,950 bushels of turnips and 13,130 bushels of grains.

In Huntley, there were 79 of the Irish settlers, including 15 born since 1823, and in Goulbourn and Pakenham, 59 and 56 respectively, with only a dozen births for the two townships combined. A handful of others were listed as residents of Beckwith, Lanark and Bathurst, and 54 of Robinson's original group were shown as "absent," some of them elsewhere in Canada, others in the United States, and one of them back in his native Ireland. Those in the townships other than Ramsay had, by March, 1826, cleared a combined 347 acres on which they had grown 1,508 bushels of potatoes, 3,195 of turnips, and 18,339 of grain.

It was easy to assume that the "military settlements" were a proven success: by 1824 more than 10,000 persons lived in Lanark and Carleton counties — in Lanark Township alone the population was 1,560; the livestock numbered in the thousands rather than the hundreds; and the newcomers continued to arrive in substantial numbers. But among settlers themselves, isolated as they were in small communities and forest clearings, optimism was far from widespread. One old settler, for example, reminiscing for the Perth Courier in 1861, suggested the following reason for the settlements' success:

In the hard times, many men lost heart, and left before they had cleared their lots. ...It was a good thing for all of us who remained, though we did not think so, that Government refused us our title deeds [because we] could not repay the money advanced in 1820 and 1821. ...But their policy was to our present advantage. With the deeds in our possession before the good time came, nearly every man of us ... would have sold off at any price and departed for the States or for home. But now things are changed.

Chapter 4

MILL AND DEVELOPMENT

Upper Canadian communities were as a rule able to attract small scale entrepreneurs who could see advantages where others would turn away. The Mississippi region was no exception for it had — apart from the lumbering potential which was to grow greatly in ensuing decades — generous quantities of running water which in turn meant mill sites.

One of the first entrepreneurs was Colonel Andrew Playfair who took land by the Mississippi in the north-east corner of Bathurst at the time of the original Perth settlement, but took time to establish his grist and sawmills there. He, for many years to come, was one of the community's liveliest promoters and a great deal of development was directly due to him. The first mill, however, was David Shepherd's which was built at today's Almonte in 1819 but burned down within the year. The agreement with the government to build mills there, in return for a two-hundred-acre site, then passed to an American living in Brockville who in turn gave it to his son-in-law, Daniel Shipman, a member of one of that town's Loyalist families. In 1821, Shipman reconstructed the sawmill and by the next year had the obligatory grist mill operating; thus the place's name was naturally changed from Shepherd's Falls to Shipman's Mills, soon after to Ramsayville and, in the 1850s to Waterford and then Almonte.

Farther up the Mississippi an Irish immigrant, Edmond Morphy, settled with his family in 1819 at what was to become, within a decade, Carleton Place. The next year a would-be miller by the name of Coleman bought the water power rights alongside part of Morphy's property, but as he was unable to fulfil the contractual agreement to grind a bushel of wheat in six months, he was replaced by Hugh Boulton who had a grist mill up and working, with a good clientele of customers from the surrounding settlements.

By the next year there was a sizeable settlement, with a sawmill (Bailey's Mills) added, as well as a potash factory, a tannery, a store, and a hotel or "groggery." After 1825 the village also had Frank Jessup's distillery which, despite competition, was renowned for many miles around.

Other mills were built both in anticipation and as a result of settlement in the 1820s. Captain Alex Ferguson's grist mill on the Clyde River was in operation in 1821. Downstream from Almonte, where the red pine grew so thickly that it seemed only natural to name the falls at the curve in the river as Norway Pine Falls. In 1822, Alexander Snedden, one of a Scottish immigrant family, took an option on the water rights and, in four years, had a grist mill at work in what then became Snedden's Mills. After another four years, during which time Snedden also took to cutting timber farther afield for the Quebec market, he added a sawmill, timber slide and hotel. The community was eventually called Blakenay. In 1823, several members of the Teskey family from Ireland, settled at what is now Appleton and raised both grist and sawmills at the falls on the Mississippi there. The same year, James Harvey from Brockville, and John Powell of Perth, came to the future site of Pakenham Village and soon built a sawmill and potash

factory. After a merchant had set up a store close by and the community promised to be a flourishing one, they rounded out their commercial venture with the addition of a grist mill and then, in 1831, sold their interests to Andrew Dickson of Galetta.

Farther towards the Mississippi's outlet at the Ottawa River, in Fitzroy, Alex McMillan and Donald Dingwell put up a sawmill in 1825, just a short while after Herman Lander completed the township's first grist mill on the Carp River in 1824. At Ramsay, a settlement on the Indian River, another of the Mississippi's tributaries, Edmund Bellamy, who had come from Vermont, also built a grist mill in 1824. From Bellamy's Mills the name of the village was eventually changed to Clayton. At the site of Fallbrook in Bathurst, on the Fall River, William Bolton operated a grist mill in the early 1820s and, once it was a going concern, he too added a sawmill. In the mid-1820s James Ennis constructed a grist mill at Freer's Falls in Drummond (Freer himself was a navy officer who first owned the paper deed), and then a sawmill and oat mill, with the result that the community became Innisville. Like other places in the Mississippi valley, it was also to have woollen mills in years to come.

The best known today of the early grist mills was built in 1830 by William and John Baird on the Indian River in Ramsay. Known now as the Mill of Kintail Museum, the mill is kept by its owner, Major J. F. Leys, much as it was 40 years ago when it was restored and used as a studio by Dr. Tait McKenzie, whose fame as a sculptor went far beyond Canada.

But if, in early settlements, saw- and grist mills were enterprises immediately most suitable, they were far from being the only ones. Charles Sherriff, who had a reputation as "probably the greatest free-enterpriser in pioneer Carleton," had 3,000 acres at Fitzroy Harbour and a number of dwellings and commercial buildings set up between the time of his arrival there in 1818 and that of the settlers in 1820. He collected the timber dues for government, which in the 1820s surpassed the equivalent of \$10,000 annually; at the same time Sherriff constructed slides, helped organize the traffic of rafts from his property on to Quebec, controlled the passage from the Chats to Lower Canada, entered in a fairly extensive way into the lumbering and milling businesses, and gave over a good deal of his time to supporting interest in a Georgian Bay Canal.

There was also support in the early 1820s for making the Mississippi navigable and connecting it with other rivers and works to ultimately link up with the Moira River and Lake Simcoe. Fantastic though this may seem today, it was seriously considered by army engineers and surveyors, and looked into by Samuel Clowes, a provincial civil engineer who was also involved in the building of the Rideau Canal. In September and October, 1824, when plans for the Rideau were already well advanced, a Major G. Eliot, who had been for some years an army and government troubleshooter, and who seemed able to live for days on end off the land entirely on his own, was sent to see if it would be feasible to have the Mississippi as part of a waterway connecting the eastern and western parts of the province. As this was only one of the duties that he had to attend to — the others are not of concern here — he admitted to "not having had time to examine the Mississippi [sic]" in detail; however, he did report that from "the Reports of Messrs. Clowes and Smyth [British army officers] and such information

as I have been able to get together from other sources," he had come to the opinion that neither the north nor the south branch (apparently the Fall River) of the Mississippi "favour an idea of its being susceptible of sufficient improvement, except at an expense that would most probably interfere with those [improvements] projected by the Rideau."

Eliot was clearly fascinated with the many tributaries and connections of the Mississippi but, nevertheless, commented that making it, along with the Ottawa River, navigable for bateaux (ultimately the Georgian Bay scheme), was not "of great National importance" at the time of his report. Even though the idea did not receive the necessary official sanction, it was not forgotten and others were to revive variations on it in years to come. No doubt they were influenced by the fact that "large Boat [s] carrying three tons burthern" were sometimes used to carry goods from Montreal as far upstream as Lanark.

Practically from the beginning of settlement there was the business of land speculation. A good deal of land, during Sherwood's first surveys of the eastern section of townships of the Mississippi region, were marked to "Bill Flint, assignee of R. Sherwood." Flint, who was later a power in government, and a leader of temperance movements, as well as a dabbler in more westerly mining ventures, seems to have traded his lands by the same set of rules that the settlers used to trade theirs among themselves.

Flint was by no means a developer in the way that the Canada Land Company was when, after 1826, it was permitted to purchase vast areas of land from the Crown in return for a guarantee to open them for genuine settlers. Although most of the company's holdings were in the western part of the province, it did have scattered areas, generally of a hundred acres upwards, in the eastern part of the Mississippi watershed, and regularly advertised them for sale locally.

The terms were not always the same, but residents regarded them as very fair. They were either one-fifth, or one-tenth, of the purchase price down — which of course varied according to time and location — and the remainder in five or ten yearly instalments. The Bathurst Courier, which from the start of the 1830s was circulated throughout the settled parts of the Mississippi region, often thought the company:

... worthy the attention of those having friends coming out ... who may be anxious to provide them with suitable and convenient lands, the terms being easy.... The Company, it will be seen are ready to extend accomodation [sic] in every way in their power, whereby a mutual advantage may be gained, both in giving information and facilitating the sale of cleared farms.

There could be little question about the comprehensiveness of the company's information. It carefully explained how wild lands should be cleared, how to best rotate and sow crops, which types of produce could be most economically grown, the expected yield per acre, the costs of buildings, the effects of different kinds of weather (down to a detailed dissertation on how to anticipate and combat the ravages of frost), the fruits and garden produce that should be grown, the game and wild beasts that should be either

sought out or avoided, and it even gave details of "winter avocations" that were calculated to prevent anybody from falling into inactivity.

Individual arrangements were soulless by comparison. A typical notice read as follows:

TO EMIGRANTS

The subscriber is willing to let, for a term of years, to an industrious and sober, married man, accustomed to good farming, from 30 to 40 acres of land, in good condition, — in crop, consisting of wheat, oats, potatoes, hay, &c., besides pasture. An approved tenant will get a fair proportion of the crop of this season, and will be required to give a reasonable share of the produce in future, as rent

Eben. Wilson
Township of North Sherbrooke

But it was lumbering that was the greatest single enterprise. It shaped the watershed, changing the early concept of virtually self-contained settlers' communities with their eyes turned south to the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario and what little trade their surplus produce might bring in the United States and Montreal, to that of communities that grew up with the square timber trade, which were dependent upon it, and yet strived in their utilization of resources to maintain an existence that was apart from it.

Lumbering was never regarded as a trade with which it was altogether decent to be involved. Even the squatters who took off up into Darling, Lavant, Blithfield and elsewhere, and burned sizeable stands of timber for potash, were often seen as more potentially useful citizens than those who, rootless or nearly so, spent their winters in the lumbering shanties. Eventually, as lumbering became more organized, feelings began to change into respect towards those who did the organizing. But the attempts to categorize and explain the trade, to define its different stages, were not successful. It seemed to depend so much on chance — the chance that the market at Quebec for overseas would not be glutted, the chance that there would be a market for square timber and/or sawn logs in America, the chance that the spring floods would be either too extensive or too little to permit or prevent the winter's cut from being got out, the chance that the snows would come in time for any real cutting to be done at all, and so on —, that nobody was really sure that next year's cut, or that five years from now, would not be the last. In retrospect it is easier to see that there were stages in lumbering, but it is best to bear in mind that the inhabitants of the Mississippi were not aware of them as we are today, and that one overlapped the other by decades.

In the early 1820s, the settlers who went to the shanties in winter, or worked in small groups of their own, gave the impression to observers that they did so as a temporary expedient, while their farms were little more than clearings in the forest, so that they could earn a little extra for necessities. Major Eliot, during one of his wanderings through the area in 1824, felt obliged to comment that:

Their Clearings are generally wretched/small & .. they are driven from their Farms ... to go Lumbering which they do in great numbers, leaving their Wives & Children to make the best they can of it during their absence.

Whatever the original intent, it was a practice that quickly became habit.

Chapter 5

SQUARE TIMBER AND THE LUMBER TRADE

The 'moonlighting' settler had a choice: he could scrape together a few provisions of his own and, with similarly supplied companies, take short forays into the surrounding forest, bringing the cut out in spring; or he could arrange for an advance in supplies from a local or locally-based entrepreneur who would take a given percentage of the value of his cut; or, finally, he could sign on as a paid hand with one of the lumbering firms which in turn either sold to a forwarder or itself arranged for its rafts to be sold to exporting firms in Quebec. There were, of course, variations on these arrangements, but they were all risky. The first merchants' rafts out in April contained upwards of 50,000 staves, while individually owned rafts were generally smaller. By the early 1830s there were consequently a number of lumbering trails established, one of the principal running from Ramsay through Lanark and Darling to "Kilibogie" as it is called, which, according to Reverend Joshua Fraser in 1883, had been a centre of lumbering activity by "Americans" since 1812.

A list of local inhabitants who went lumbering on their own account from the 1820s would be a lengthy one, but by the early 1830s those who were going about it in a fairly successful and systematic way included the Sheriffs, the Sneddens, the Dicksons, the Cauldwells (or Caldwells), the Yules, the Brysons and the Dunns, and later, the Gillies, Gilmours, Mairs, and McLarens, some of whom, like the giants of the Ottawa Valley in decades to come — the Egans and the Booths — operated locally from bases elsewhere.

Local forwarders frequently spent their winters in the region and the rest of the year in Quebec. One of these, James Flintoff, would advertise locally in August as follows:

TIMBER WANTED

The subscriber wishes to inform all those whom it may concern, that he intends to purchase Oak and Elm timber ... during the ensuing winter.... He will pay for good Rock Elm well squared &c. from 3d. to 4d. per foot that is to say all pieces containing 40 Cubic feet 3d. all containing 45, 3-1/2d. and all which may contain 50 feet 4d. per foot, for Oak he will pay the same prices as last year, with some advance on choice peices [sic]. No peice [sic] of Elm will be taken under 30 feet long.

The temptation to go where the timber was, rather than where licences permitted, was of course great and landowners were frequently obliged to advertise along the following lines:

CAUTION. I hereby caution any person or persons against trespassing on [my] lot ... or cutting or taking any timber thereof as any person found doing so after this notice shall be prosecuted:

DOUGLAS McTAVISH
Beckwith, Jan. 10th 1839.

But it was natural calamities rather than legal restraints that brought down many of the smaller lumberers. In a typically bad year, 1840, many, as the Bathurst Courier reported, suffered "serious losses," as the snow was already off the ground in early March causing lumberers to be "brought to a stand in the preparing their timber for market, in consequence of which, it is conjectured, only about one-third of the timber will be got out and brought to market." That year, in fact, 13,192 pieces of white pine, 2,130 of red pine, 3,292 of oak, and 1,573 of elm passed the Chaudière Falls from places farther up the river.

The next year, prices were low and it was estimated that for the lumberer whose "circumstances [were] favourable to his timber reaching market safe," there was only "sufficient for his labour." There were also gloomy comments about the ever-increasing distances between the settled communities and the winter shanties "as the best timber of the forest disappear[s]." The Courier was moved to print that: "When the Lumber Trade ceases in this quarter, the Bathurst District will loose [sic] its main support — its prosperity will diminish." The effects, nevertheless, were not necessarily distributed uniformly. One newspaperman, who went on a tour of inspection, found that at the Chats, the Sherriffs' interests, despite "pushing enterprise," were "receding" and their properties had numerous tenantless buildings. Opposite the Chats, however, George Buchanan had about seventy cribs a day passing over his slides (at five shillings — about a dollar — each) and "thus an enterprising man is now reaping ... well earned benefits." At Pakenham Village, too, Andrew Dickson's milling and lumbering businesses were in fine order to the extent that the reporter thought it had "advanced more in the last twelve months, than, I might say, all the other places in my sketches put together."

In 1842, spring again came early, and anxious lumberers took "unusual risk ... in travelling on the ice," with the result that in one week in March "no less than 12 teams [have] gone through the ice on Chatts [sic] Lake." The use of canoes instead of skiffs in open water by lumbermen was also deplored by local persons.

By 1844, the overall outlook had improved. British demand for square timber greatly increased and stock piles in Quebec were accordingly reduced. Consequently, as noted in the Bytown Gazette, "about twice the quantity of White Pine" went down the Ottawa River as compared with the year before — or a total of 5,850,000 feet (red pine remained about the same at 4,220,000 feet).

This development, combined with low prices for provisions over the 1843-44 winter and low wages, was certainly beneficial for the larger operators and dealers. However, some of the smaller lumbermen, despite improved facilities — a number of government slides had recently been built in the area —, were unable to get all of their cut off the smaller streams and there was more loss than they could bear. Within the year, Alexander Snedden had to declare bankruptcy and submit to public sale:

The greater part of the east half of ... lot number twenty five, in the ninth concession of Ramsay. There are upon this lot, a Grist Mill and a Saw Mill, and the water privileges are capable of being employed to great advantage. There is also a Slide upon this lot, through which a great part of the Lumber going down the Mississippi passes.



A lumber camp in winter, from an oil painting by F. S. Coburn.



An interior view of a lumberman's shanty as shown in the February 5, 1870, issue of *The Canadian Illustrated News*.

In 1845, Patrick Hartney of Lanark also had to dissolve his lumbering partnership with Thomas Ryan and to announce that:

The concerns are all in the hands of Thos. Ryan and Jas. Mair. And by their paying all such lawful debts hitherto contracted for the furtherance of said timber ... I, Patrick Hartney, resign all right, title and claim to that Raft of Timber marked J.M., P.H., & J.R.

The vagaries of the lumbering business distressed others and among those who left that year was John Currie, one of the original Lanark settlers, who offered for sale:

Lot No. 13 in the 12th con. of the Township of Dalhousie, in the District of Bathurst, and situated on the Mississippi River. There is a Grist Mill, with two run of stones, and a Saw Mill on the property, with a dwelling house and other buildings, &c.

Other local organizers, however, found that cutting timber fitted in well with other pursuits. A son of one of the first Lanark settlers, Alexander Caldwell, who ran the mills in Lanark, advertised "great quantities of sound lumber" for sale both in the village and at Perth. These were far from being oddments that the Quebec trade did not take. Instead they were:

1,000,000 feet inch Pine Boards from 10 to 18 feet long: do. Clear Dry Boards, inch, 60,000 feet: besides Green of the same quality.... ALSO, 2 inch Plank, 100,000 feet, from 12 to 16 feet long. Also, a good quantity 1-1/2 inch Plank, clear and common, 1-1/4 inch do ... and Scantlings, Beams, Posts and Joists.... Also, Boxwood from 2, 1-1/2, 1-1/4, 1/2 inch ... well seasoned. Laths 300,000 feet, and a great many kinds too numerous to mention. All of which he will dispose of low for Cash or short approved Credit, or produce. ..

The Caldwells were also general merchants at Lanark, as were the Mairs and Halls who also had a hand in lumbering and sawmilling. Similar arrangements, with local needs in mind, were made at the same time at other centres. From the Carleton Place Mills, for instance, the Bells and Rosamonds offered for sale:

200,000 feet inch Boards, 12, 14, 16 & 18 feet long
100,000 feet 1-1/2 inch Plank.

ALSO,
2 inch Plank, Clapboards, Lath, Scantling, Rafters & Joists.

It was, however, John Gillies — the son of James Gillies who made his own way to Canada at the age of 55, and manufactured potash in the fifth concession of Lanark township — who really developed the Carleton Place sawmills in later years. He became one of the Ottawa Valley's most successful lumbering men with mills at Renfrew and Braeside besides Carleton Place. Another of his mills, on the Clyde a couple of miles above Lanark Village, was developed into a complex which, with later improvements, still stands today as Herron Mills. These mills, which were worked as recently

as the 1940s, are in a fine state of preservation and, with their picturesque surroundings, could be included in a conservation area. John Gillies sold them in 1864 "in first-class condition, and ... having good communication with the surrounding country," when he advertised them as:

Consisting of a first-class FLOURING MILL the Machinery of which is nearly new, and has two run of stones. Also, an OAT MILL, having two run of stones; and, also, a CARDING MILL complete, all of which are ... capable of doing a large business, there being a plentiful supply of water at all seasons of the year, and situated in a good agricultural country. There is also adjoining the Mills, two large and comfortable Dwelling Houses and all necessary out-buildings, with 104 acres of Land, mostly cleared.

In the later part of the 1840s, with British demand for square timber and stock piles at Quebec declining, the lumbering industry was in a relatively depressed state. The local firms weathered it fairly well, although there were complaints that "the 'great lumbering business' ... has gone on regularly year after year ... in consuming the means of the farmer, the merchant, the banker, the large and the small capitalist." Furthermore, timber stands were becoming thinned and even the rear townships of Bagot and Blithfield, and others on into Renfrew County, were pessimistically described as being "impoverished by all the valuable timber being cut off." Some of what were known as the "irregular dealers in lumber" — the winter 'moonlighters' — gave up and concentrated on their farms or their trades. Others were not so easily discouraged. "How many are there everywhere," asked W. O. Buell, member of a well-known Upper Canadian family, "particularly in this District [Bathurst], who have forsaken their comfortable farms, or who have turned aside from a prosperous mercantile business, to invest their all in lumbering?" He blamed the Quebec monopolists, "leading men of the Country, Bankers and others" for a situation which he hardly expected to improve.

The subject was a favourite one in the area's newspapers. "If the farmers of the Bathurst District," in the words of one letter to the editor, "do not pluck up courage — do not determine to throw off their character of half farmer, half shantyman (and half speculator, if you can excuse the 'bull',) the sooner they buy a pick, spade and tin pan apiece, and start for California, the better for themselves."

Nevertheless, in October, 1849, before the above comment was written, the purveyors of the financial outlook in the country's commercial capital, Montreal, had detected a silver lining. "The Americans," as one of them noted in the Montreal Gazette, "have entered the market this season, and have, up to the present period, purchased upwards of a million feet of square timber. The price obtained has been fifteen to twenty per cent above the Quebec quotations.... Large quantities of sawn timber have also been disposed of at an equally good figure." In no time at all there were vast new sawmills at the Chats (Egan's), the Chaudière, and Rideau Falls, many of them run by Americans who had the capital to exploit the new industry while, at the same time, the old square timber trade continued. By 1851, the duty collected on timber passing Bytown (Ottawa) for Quebec averaged about £25,000 (around \$100,000) while the trade itself at Bytown was estimated at in excess of half a million pounds, or in the region of two hundred million



A timber slide at Les Chats as depicted by artist W. H. Bartlett.

dollars, and the sawmills prepared upwards of twenty million feet of sawed lumber annually. But the great benefit of the American trade was that it would take hardwoods as well as softwoods, so that stands that had once been ignored were now commercial assets. The small man, the half-shantyman-half-farmer, was, however, not equal to the demand. The new trade required investment capital which he did not have, although some found ways of continuing their small-scale winter operations and of participating in the older trade. Others made their choice: either they opted for the ranks of thousands who formed a winter "rural proletariat" as hired hands of the lumbering firms, or returned to their farms and contented themselves with helping supply the shanties, or found some other kind of life altogether including that in the gold fields of the west coast.

The larger Mississippi firms were ready for participation. The Bells and Rosamonds lost no time in seeking supply arrangements, and, in the early 1850s, for example, advertised for "from 1,000 to 3,000 good Merchantable Pine Saw Logs, to be delivered at Carleton Place in the Spring ... for which Cash will be paid on delivery." In 1854, in Drummond Township on the Mississippi River two miles from Lanark Village, J. M. G. Hall set up a new steam sawmill, with a 40-horsepower engine. It was said that a piece of square timber on the river was worth about 15 shillings, whereas in its sawed state it was worth £2.10s. — or more than three times as much. The Bathurst Courier applauded and trusted that others would soon follow Hall's example. The Courier in fact thought that for "every dollar received for square timber, ten dollars would be received for the same timber if sawed into boards." Hall was unlucky. The next summer his "extensive Steam Saw Mills" were burned down "about two o'clock in the morning [of 13 July, 1855, when despite] ... the fires under the boilers [being] all extinguished the evening before at six o'clock, ... fire broke out in the end of the building opposite the boilers, ... [supposedly] due to the work of an incendiary."

Others later built sawmills of the new variety to fill the void.

For a while in the early 1850s, not only the Mississippi but the whole of the Ottawa valley was practically overcome with exuberance at the great wealth that seemed so readily at hand. It was "a well known fact that the trade (in sawed lumber alone) is yearly increasing, and in a few years it is believed the United States must depend altogether on Canada for their supply ... the price of sawed lumber has never been higher." There was "no County, or Union of Counties, in Canada possessing a greater amount of natural wealth ... than the Counties of Lanark and Renfrew.... The pine forests are inexhaustible ... there is timber enough here to supply the world for thousands of years to come.... There is water power enough in the Counties to drive thousands of saw mills." With "the assistance of the saw-mill our groves of pine may remain the sources of national wealth to Canada for ages yet to come." Such comments were distributed widely, in printed form as well as by word of mouth, and were devoutly believed. As a result there was a popular reaction to the cutting of square timber. Timber, it was claimed, was "being literally wasted" by being sent down to Quebec in its square form, "to fill the pockets of a few sharkers in the old capital of Canada." Why, instead of having it done in England, could not the "sawing it into boards" be done between Petawawa and Ottawa "and the labor and capital necessary to do so expended within our own Counties?" Some went so far as

to state that they had "not the slightest doubt" that "this will be so eventually." Elsewhere it was pointed out that:

In making a stick of white pine seventy feet long and twenty inches square, at least 1,000 feet of the best boards, worth £7.10s. at Albany, are wasted. A raft containing 500 pieces of such timber is therefore manufactured at a sacrifice [sic] of over £3,000 worth of value. The part cut away and destroyed in the two processes of scoring and hewing, being the outside, consists of the clearest and best material in the tree. It would make what is called 'clear stuff', and as such brings the highest price in the market. At the lowest calculation there must be at least £100,000 worth of this valuable wood destroyed annually upon the Ottawa and its tributaries. . . .

Not only that, but the chips, splinters, blocks and slabs left on the ground together with the brush from fallen trees were to blame at least for feeding "those extensive fires which rage through the pine forests and destroy the living timber." And there was the fact that:

A white pine gang consists of five men who will make five large pieces of timber in a day. These five men could cut 50 saw logs in the same time. They could cut up ten trees and each tree into five logs. — The labor saved is thus one-half, and the timber saved in the shape of boards would be 10,000 feet, worth £75 in Albany.

Practice, however, differed from theory. The next year, 1855, the effects of the far-away war in the Crimea, in which Britain was involved, reached Quebec and the lumber trade, and depression was immediate and obvious.

Lumberers had, in recent years become increasingly subject to government regulations (the Crown Timber Act of 1849 was a major piece of legislation) and in June, 1855, they petitioned the government to remit the ground rent on timber limits during the period of depression. Otherwise, the effect would be to compel them to add unnecessarily to existing timber stocks. They felt that: "Generally speaking, there is too much timber made — the market becomes glutted, and ruinous prices are the result." During that year, prices at Quebec were markedly lower than the costs of production; for instance, "good red pine, averaging 44 feet, sold for 10-1/2d." The lumberers, no matter what others might proclaim, did not believe that the forests were inexhaustible, but felt that: "each of those trees on which we expend our labour, and sell for a few dollars, will require two centuries of growth to replace it."

This early thought in forest management, while not forgotten, was not of prime concern when in the next year, the industry's fortunes revived. This change was not due only to the ending of the Crimean War: other contributing factors were the cessation of British preferences, the signing of a reciprocity treaty with the United States (which Americans later claimed benefitted Canada but not them), and the opening of the American mid-west. The new railway between Ottawa and the St. Lawrence front helped volume considerably and, in 1856, in the first week of June alone, five million feet of lumber from the Ottawa River was contracted for the Chicago market

and delivered at Prescott for shipment to Ogdensburg from where it was freighted to its destination at \$3.50 per thousand feet.

The sawn lumber for the eastern market and the Hudson River went no cheaper, and, with competition between Chicago and New York, prices for the Canadian product rose. It was a matter of only passing concern, that on the Mississippi that year, between 400,000 and 500,000 feet of white pine were left stranded for the time being by the lack of high water. "The quantity of timber that will reach Quebec this season," reported the Bytown Citizen, "will [therefore] be comparatively small." That, it was generally agreed, was not the catastrophe that it might once have been with only the one market and annual accounting.

The Crown Lands Commissioner's Report for 1857 reflected the renewed buoyancy. In the nine years prior to 1856, he noted, there had been sent to Quebec from above Ottawa some 94,509,565 cubic feet of white pine, 25,591,805 cubic feet of red pine, and 2,286,690 cubic feet of other square timber. And, basing his figures on saw logs cut from Crown lands, he estimated that 299,535,005 feet board measure of sawn lumber had been exported during the same period. Those, he suggested, were impressive figures, but he further "estimated that there must be still standing on the Ottawa and its tributaries, about forty-three millions of tons of timber of the kinds and dimensions now taken to market, and about a hundred and eighty millions of tons of a smaller size, that might be made use of," so that, future growth apart, "there is a sufficient supply for a trade as large as the present, for upwards of a century."

Lumbermen themselves were more inclined to caution. An agreement of 1855-56 between the principal Ottawa lumberers and Quebec dealers "not to manufacture or purchase anything but first class timber," had not proved satisfactory, and, in 1857, the valley's lumbermen fell back on an alternative. They considered the fact that: "the valley of the Ottawa is now the only large Timber preserve on this Continent, and that Chicago to the West, as well as Albany to the East, have become importers of wood on as large a scale as Quebec," and that "the inevitable tendency of events is towards the speedy increase of demand upon our resources." Thus influenced, they agreed that it was both the "interest and duty of limit holders" to "conserve the species" by producing only the amount of timber that would return a profit on the capital employed. As the total number of hired workers would serve as "an approximate estimate of the season's production" by each firm, the lumbermen decided to keep a central "Hiring and Registry Office" in Ottawa, and "to register in the said office all the men we shall employ."

The system, however, was difficult to put into practice, not least of all because the inequalities already existing between the lumbering firms made it nearly impossible for rivalries to be contained. J. Egan's company, for instance, which employed nearly 4,000 men at this time in a hundred or so lumbering areas, paid for its 2,894 square miles of timber limits a total of £1,641 in government duty. But Gilmour's — whose operations were wide-spread — paid nearly £3,650 for a practically similar total area of 2,854 square miles. On the other hand, other firms' timber limits numbering only in the hundreds of square miles were assessed at as much as £2,400, and it was publicly asked whether only technical reasons were involved or whether this inequality was "a part of a system of bribery."

The years that followed hardly helped matters as demand was uncertain and difficult to anticipate. During the American civil war in the early 1860s, fluctuations were the rule rather than the exception. There were some good years like 1863 when: "A considerable demand for Canadian sawn lumber [sprang] up in the United States, and large sales of superior qualities [were] made ... at advanced rates, leaving the market ... bare ..[and] employ [ing] the mills for some months." The next year, too, was "exceptional." But in 1865, with the ending of American reciprocity and a great decline in gold in New York, large stocks of sawn lumber were held up in Canada for months and it was assumed that the American market would soon be lost. In fact demand did continue for some years to come and local sawmills shared in the cutting of hundreds of thousands of feet of sawn lumber annually for the States. Both Caldwells' and McLaren and Gillies' erected large new sawmills, one in Lanark which was described as "turn [ing] out an immense amount of lumber," and the other at Carleton Place which was "an extensive Frame Saw Mill ... for between seventy and eighty saws." So intense was the activity that one of the local newspapers drew the attention of sawmill owners to a clause of the Fishery Act passed in 1865, to the effect that:

... deleterious substance, shall not be drawn into, be left or remain in any water frequented by any of the kinds of fish mentioned in this Act; and sawdust [emphases original] or mill rubbish, shall not be drifted or thrown into any stream frequented by salmon, salmon trout, pickerel or bass, under a penalty not exceeding one hundred dollars.

The largest sawmill in Perth was fined within months under the Act, but no record has been found of mills on the Mississippi being charged.

With British demand for different kinds of wood increasing annually (exporting firms bought millions of feet of pine lumber and square timber in the last decades of the 19th century), there was little fear of over supply. Many of the area's farmers returned to the winter shanties — this time as hired hands; even after Confederation it was said to be "common for farmers to go into the woods as lumbermen."

In one year during the mid-1860s, 1,541,000 feet of timber went down the Mississippi. Most of the timber brought down was by McLaren and Gillies' with 625,000 feet, by Robertson's with 376,000, Caldwells with 245,000, Mair's with 160,000 followed by the "unenumerated" total of 135,000 feet.

In the same year, more than ten times the Mississippi's amount of timber was cut farther up the Ottawa River on the Madawaska, Petawawa, Indian, Black and other rivers. And much of this timber was cut by firms which also worked the Mississippi.

By the 1870s the "gradual clearing up of the timber lands" along the Mississippi was accepted as being in the near future. A good number of commercial stands still remained, however, in the Effingham, Abinger and Barrie areas where timber licences had been given since the 1850s to Gilmour's, McLaren and Gillies', and Caldwells'. The region was in fact the scene of a dispute between the last two companies over whether Caldwells' could use streams developed for passing timber by McLaren and

Gillies'. The dispute had considerable constitutional significance in the new organization of government in Canada (the matter is a complicated one that cannot be gone into here). In 1881, the provincial Legislature decided the matter by passing an Act which permitted use provided that reasonable compensation was paid to the developer.

Some idea of the timber available and the state of sawmilling in the period just before the drives came to an end is provided by answers to a questionnaire which the Bureau of Forestry sent to millowners in 1897. Thomas Curry of Myers Cave on the Mississippi stated that his water-powered mill was capable of producing 8,000 feet per day, and that he used upwards of 800 logs of oak, pine, ash and hemlock annually, all of which was sold in Canadian markets. His mill ran three months in the year and he employed two men in the woods. He would, he wrote, "cut more if we had the pine [,] the Crown Land agent would not give me a limit [;] our timber is scarce and we haf[sic] to be careful of it." At Fallbrook, William Lees used a total of "3,000 standards" annually, mostly of hemlock, but also of a little ash, basswood, pine and cedar. He purchased 600,000 feet from "those having patents for their lands," sold 100,000 feet for the British market, and kept the bulk in Canada. He employed seven men at his mills and 12 in the woods. His mill ran from three to four months in the year, as "logs of any kind are getting very scarce." A steam mill at Carleton Place was reported as annually using 36,000 standards of logs of equal quantities of basswood, ash, hemlock, birch, elm and maple. One half of the production was sold in Canada outside the immediate area, and the "balance is custom sawing for farmers."

In other townships the situation was much the same. In Dalhousie equal quantities of pine, basswood, ash, spruce, hemlock, poplar and elm were sawn for local needs, and lumber was, as one owner said, "getting scarce with very little saliable [sic] timber to be had." A sawmill operator in Denbigh complained: "The limit holder is taking all the pine that is left, the down timber, dry trees, everything that has a board in it." In Lanark, another complaint: "The quality is very infiarier [sic] ." Elsewhere there were complaints that what standing timber there was was being ignored by the limit holders.

The last drive went down from the head of the Mississippi in the first decade of the present century, leaving a few sawmills and firms on the Mississippi that, in some cases, still operate today.

Chapter 6

AGRICULTURE

It was only natural for agriculture in the Mississippi valley to be affected by so powerful an influence as the lumbering industry. In the 1820s and early '30s, once the settlers had their clearings sown to small crops of wheat, corn, oats, peas, potatoes and turnips in combinations that suited their immediate needs, such surplus as they might produce then paid the miller for grinding flour, or the merchant for various needed implements and household articles, or was sold for a little cash in one of the settlements. Sometimes the settler might go to Perth (the focal point of the Bathurst District) to sell his produce, or even to Brockville or Prescott on roads which, it was agreed, were abominable but from time to time passable. If the fancy took him — and if he did not belong to a band of teetotallers, it apparently did every now and again — he might take some of his surplus grain to one of the distillers and either receive cash or payment in kind. Judging by the number of advertisements, distillers did well in offering: "To Farmers — The highest price in Cash ... for Barley, Rye & Indian Corn."

But with the amount of coming and going in the forests in winter, particularly after building began on the Rideau Canal and the release of thousands of immigrant labourers into the surrounding forests as shantymen, it was obvious that there was a market immediately on hand. The settler with produce could then sell directly to the "boss" of the shanty or to the shantymen themselves, or he could take his wares to the market at Bytown where prices were always higher because lumbermen concentrated there and bought in bulk. And there was the easy way out of simply advertising his crops for public auction thus:

PUBLIC AUCTION

There will be sold on Tuesday the 13th Instant at
12 o'clock noon on the farm of the Subscriber a field of Oats,
Pease [sic] and Potatoes to the highest bidder.

There was, however, a good deal of competition from suppliers who brought produce, especially flour, up from the United States and sold in Bytown at lower prices than the local settler could afford to meet. Montreal suppliers thought nothing of running teams of horses for hundreds of miles up the Ottawa River on the mid-winter ice, hauling tons of supplies behind them. Sometimes, by accident or design, the farmer could beat the system, but it was altogether too risky to count on that possibility. In February of 1840, for example, money was short and farmers decided to hold back a good part of their produce in the hope that lumbermen would eventually buy high. As a result, wheat was particularly hard to find. Even in the villages where the quarter loaf of bread sold for tenpence (about twenty cents), and the cost of a bushel of wheat at its market rate was four shillings and sixpence to four shillings and ninepence (over a dollar), prices were said to "be unreasonable." Then, suddenly aware that a greater than usual surplus produce from the United States was making its way into the lumber camps, local farmers began "pouring in" to the market places in the hope of getting their produce off their hands before it became unsaleable. Many of them ended up, as the Bathurst Courier dryly remarked, "taking their produce to a distant market, but we believe a ready sale cannot now be effected, it being overstocked."

A year later the farmers recovered their losses and the Courier reported that "the Lumber Trade ... now affords a ready market for our surplus produce."

The local farmer was not, however, generally concerned with the volume of supplies from distant points as it was so great that he could not really have hoped to compete with it. It was mostly the competitive prices that disturbed him. However, in selling the hay and oats to be used for the horses and oxen which he sold to the lumber camps, the local farmer was in a better position. At the same time, he also did a good business in peas, potatoes, pork and beef. Lanark County, it was frequently stated, was "inferior to none" in its meat products. Perhaps surprisingly, Indian corn was rarely sold to the shanties and after several crop failures it was in fact hardly grown at all in the late 1830s and '40s, after which it was again grown successfully but not in large quantities.

It was in wheat — which Canada exported in great quantities during those years — that local farmers had problems. Fields of ripening wheat have for ages represented the farmer's status symbol and the local farmers certainly tried to grow as much as they could. The lumber camps were, on the whole, fairly well supplied with flour from outside, so that market could not be relied upon for a profit. Then, too, the Hessian fly could sometimes reduce the best efforts to nothing, as in 1847, when it committed "great ravages among the wheat in this neighbourhood. ... Many fields are completely destroyed — not worth cutting. If it was not the fly it was rust — and sometimes it was both. Such maladies were often blamed on lack of care. "If our farmers," complained the Courier that year, " ... [would] produce proper seed, they might in a great measure get rid of those great drawbacks ... the fly and the rust."

At other times, the farmers blamed bankers, millers and merchants for their problems. These men, claimed the farmers, regarded wheat, the staple commodity, as the measurement of value and therefore tricked them frequently when it was involved. One of the Lanark members of the Legislature, M. Cameron, felt obliged to warn them on that point in 1841: "Is there one of you that does not know that Commercial Credit, Banks, and Merchants carry on the lumber trade, raise the price of wheat and pork, and in fact alone create a demand for these articles?"

The farmers, nonetheless, kept their own judgement, which often meant hoarding wheat all winter in the hope of a good price that was as likely as not a bad one in the end. This was a " 'losing' policy," wrote one Lanark farmer in 1848:

He should get his grain thrashed out in the fall, and if a fair price can be realized, which it seldom fails to do at this season — ship it to Montreal and get his 'cash' for it. ... One of our farmers ('a knowing one') thrashed out his wheat ... induced his neighbour to do the same, and purchased 200 bushels from him. He shipped the whole, about 500 bushels, to Montreal in the Fall, and went down himself and disposed of it at 6s. 4-1/2d. a bushel. What is to hinder others from doing as he did. The freight we believe cost about 4d. a bushel.

That was not a solution that too many took to heart. In the 1840s farmers got between 30 and 40 bushels an acre, and, in 1851, "the grain raised in this section of country" was claimed to be "inferior to none." But for the farmer, at times, that hardly seemed the important point. For some years in the 1850s and after, the area grew too little wheat for its own needs and grain had to be brought in from other centres. Farmers, in turn, complained about markets that made nonsense of their calculations. In 1854-55, for instance, grain sold at high prices, and while some hoarded in hope of an even better price, others — some of whom claimed that there were only uncertain ways of transporting grain out — thought it economically wiser to continue the practice of feeding grain to the large numbers of pigs that they were raising for the shanties. As seen in the last chapter, the lumber trade had declined that year, so the demand for pork fell and its price went down by 50 per cent. By the end of January, 1855, it was "now almost unsaleable except for local consumption," while wheat and flour remained at high prices and the hoarder, for this year at least, made his profit.

The shanty market was not the consuming interest of every farmer in the valley, no matter how much he gained from it. A good many thought of themselves as farmers first and suppliers second, and the role of shantyman, when applicable, was likely to be a very distant third. Some early attempts at forming an agricultural society for mutual benefit came to nothing. But in 1840, one was established for the County of Lanark at Carleton Place and it proved more lasting. By January, 1842, it had, for members' breeding purposes, four Ayrshire bulls, two of them imported from Scotland, and two "very fine" boars, and seven rams. The society then proceeded to purchase two more boars and a sow "of the improved Berkshire breed." "[M]uch good has already been done," the society's secretary, James Bell, reported. "A large number of beautiful calves and pigs in these townships, bred from the Society's stock, is a sufficient evidence of this." Some money was also set aside for improved wheat seed.

Although there were predictable complaints about lack of membership — about one in ten local farmers were said at one time to belong — the society was always a going concern. In 1845, for example, it offered prizes for: "best brood Mare and Foal; two-year-old Bull; Milch Cow; two-year-old Heifer; yoke of Oxen over four years; two year-old yoke of Steers;" and various other kinds of livestock including yearling and spring boars, sows, rams and ewes. Prizes were also offered for fall and spring wheat, oats, barley, peas, potatoes, white beans, corn, turnips, beets, carrots, onions and cabbage and for iron and wood ploughs, harrows and hoes "made in the District," and a turnip sowing machine. A special premium was arranged for "any person who will erect and keep in operation in Beckwith and Ramsay for three years, a good Clover Cleaning Machine." Sundry items including "60 lbs. Butter, in neat kegs, suitable for exportation," 30 pounds of cheese, variously coloured, fulled cloth and flannel, and woollen socks, also won prizes.

Three years later, at a November show, there was an "unusually large" showing of "superior quality" horses, but what was by then "the most important part of our Stock," sheep, was found "utterly neglected among us, little or no attention being paid to the improvement of the wool and carcase," with the result that the judges were confronted with "a set of long

legged coarse animals, whose bony carcasses and unmanageable fleece more nearly resembles the Goat than the heavy Leicester or the fine woolled Merino." On the brighter side was a cheese press, made by a Mr. Hammond of Lanark, which was "as regards principle, superior to anything ... yet seen."

Ten years later, after the passing of a government act to encourage societies, it was reported that organized efforts of previous years had had "a most beneficial effect ... in improving the breeds of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs ... the cattle are generally well cared for and comfortably housed in winter — and the best seed and improved implements are an object of general desire."

In 1864 Dalhousie had its own agricultural society, and at the first fair held at McDonald's Corners, the show of potatoes was said to "excel" that of any local society, "vieing" [sic] in many respects with the Provincial Exhibition." Some of the potatoes — varieties known as Gork Red, Pink Eyes, English Red — weighed two pounds and more but "were an excellent table variety." The showing of white, yellow and red onions was also described as well above the average provincial display. By that time agricultural exhibitions and fairs were the year's highlight in many areas throughout Ontario, and, of course, remained so for decades to come.

Changed methods, careful breeding, improved seed and constant innovations in machinery — patents for hulling and cleaning smut, threshing, winnowing and fanning machines, to mention just a few of the less exotic, were issued every year — were bound to affect the appearance of the area and, from all accounts, did so vary apparently after 1840. A traveller in Pakenham in 1841 was in no doubt about its being "not only a thriving, but a singularly beautiful place also, with a grand rural scenery around [and the] farmers in the neighbourhood of the village... tasty and prospering." Ramsay, he felt, was "well settled" and "very prosperous, and can boast of a goodly number of experienced practical farmers — men of experienced reading and sound agricultural knowledge.... The great number of substantial stone buildings erected and being put up, speaks more favourably than words of its growing prosperity."

Another visitor thought that Lanark in 1842 had remarkably "good farmers" when it was considered that "19 out of 20 of the heads of families ... were weavers from Glasgow, Paisley, &c.," who had been simply "dropped into the forest" miles from anywhere.

Five years later, Thomas MacQueen took a different approach. In his detailed "Letters On Canada," affectionately "addressed to the Friend of My Boyhood, James Crawford, Esq., Hall of Caldwell," he admitted that by "the most persevering industry" the farmers of the Bathurst and Dalhousie Districts had "overcome [their] difficulties," and most of them even had "an abundance, and to spare of the substantial necessities of life." But by the same token he thought that they were now "blamable for a superfluous indulgence in luxuries.":

In most farmers' houses the master and servants eat at the same table, and the mode of living is at least fifty per cent higher than in the houses of the first class farmers in Scotland or Ireland.



A view of the Mississippi River at Lanark published in *The Canadian Illustrated News*, August 3, 1878.

He also found "the agricultural prosperity of Pakenham" to be remarkable, and he noticed that building lots in the village had increased twenty times in a dozen years, from £5 to £100. A "stranger who should visit a number of the farm houses on the banks of the Mississippi" would, he had no doubt, consider himself "...very many removes from the ... reality of wilderness."

Lanark impressed him less: "It has not prospered as some of the others have done — perhaps the 'moving spirit' is dead." But the Carleton Place area had "a 'few sparks of the fire of life.' "

In April, 1853, the editor of the Bathurst Courier toured the areas served by his paper. From Darling to Pakenham there seemed to him to be "a fine tract of country, which is well settled and contains many apparently good farms." Continuing to Ramsay, he noted that the "country is a fine level tract, and well settled — the farmers appear to be well to do in the world."

Other visitors told of similar impressions: of "a fine section of farming country"; of "most excellent farms"; "excellent stone dwelling houses, and superior out-buildings, and fences, and some very good farming"; of "large and commodious stone dwelling houses, fit for a Governor to live in"; and so on.

In 1856, the Board of Agriculture of Upper Canada published the results of a closer examination. In Huntley, by the Carp River, there was "a tract of excellent land, fit for any crop," stated the report, but "not much skillful farming here." Previous to the report, however, in 1850, with 2,080 inhabitants, the township produced 27,000 bushels of potatoes, 1,900 of oats, 1,500 of wheat; and 13,000 pounds of butter, and 5,000 pounds of wool. In Fitzroy the Board found "heavy" land of "an open soft clay," but "good [and] ... fit for any crop if drained." At mid-century this township produced in one year more than 40,000 bushels of potatoes, more than 20,000 bushels each of wheat and oats, 20,000 pounds of butter and nearly 7,000 pounds of wool. Descriptions of other townships showed the same general conclusions: there was good land and bad, some of it poorly farmed, but much of it having "well laid out farms and steading, with many excellent implements and tools."

From there, with the added impetus of strong local pressure, particularly from Colonel Andrew Playfair, for the development of land which in part forms the western section of today's Mississippi Authority, the matter was taken up by the Crown Lands Commissioner. In his June, 1857, report, he noted that the counties of Carleton, Lanark and Renfrew, then with a population of about 80,000, had land "traversed by a poor tract ... [but] generally arable and of a good quality throughout, much of it being equal to the best lands in the western peninsula in every respect." The Commissioner continued: "Three quarters of the land in these counties are disposed of, and much of the remaining quarter consists of inferior residuary lots." With this in mind, he had had his surveyors go looking and measuring to the west and north of the settled areas, and settlers had already been encouraged to come in. There were admittedly "large tracts of rough land," but they were covered "with valuable pine timber" which "much increases the value of a country for settlement, by giving the settlers on the adjoining good lands a higher price for their produce" by selling to the shanties. Then, too, to

form "a just estimate of the value of the lands fit for cultivation," it was "necessary to consider the advantages of climate and natural resources." In that area there existed "a summer for agricultural labor upwards of a month longer than that of the District of Quebec; and fall wheat, which is better in quality and yields about twenty per cent more than spring wheat, is successfully cultivated as far as settlement has yet extended."

It was from that year, 1857, that the "colonization roads" program really got underway. Local pressures certainly had a hand in bringing matters to a head, but the government had been erecting the framework for some years. One of the first provincially influential spokesmen for the idea was Thomas Keefer, eventually Deputy Minister of the Department of Public Works who, in 1847, after some time spent in the Ottawa area as a senior engineer, wrote that:

One or two roads connecting the Lumbering Districts on the Ottawa with the Back settlements of the Districts on Lake Ontario, would be of great benefit to all parties; it would facilitate and cheapen the supplies to the Lumbermen, and stimulate the farmer to raise larger crops, for which he would find a ready home and cash market, and employment for himself and teams, in transportation, during the Winter.

In 1853, after other persons, including William Lyon Mackenzie, had stated similar opinions, the Legislature passed a Public Lands Act permitting the government:

To appropriate as free grants any Public Lands in this Province to actual settlers, upon or in the vicinity of any Public Roads in any new settlements which shall or may be open through the Lands of the Crown.

Some miles of road were opened under contract and, with the optimistic appraisal that the Ottawa country was capable of supporting a population of eight million, the Bureau of Agriculture offered 100 acres free to persons who would settle the new areas which were said to have "excellent soil and climate, abundance of water [and] ... of heavy timber almost always the best." A. B. Perry, contractor for the Addington Road and who assigned himself the area around Mazinaw Lake (and) facing Bon Echo Rock (his immediate neighbours included the Meeks and the Sniders whose descendants remain in the area today), answered in 1856 "Five questions dealing with the nature of the country and its probable future." His report was published in the 1858 Journal of the Board of Agriculture.

One question asked was: "Are the lands in the back country of a quality to reward the agriculturalist for his labours?", to which he replied:

In my opinion they are. The soil is a sandy loam, more or less coloured with a vegetable mould ... in my opinion the soil is made up of the silica or sand of the surrounding rocks.

There is a feature in the growth of the timber ... in connection with the fertility of the soil, that I had not understood. Where hardwood predominates, the soil is a dark loamy sand; where pine takes a lead, a pale yellow sand is

found.... The yellow sand bears by far the most lofty gigantic trees; some having yielded to the lumbermen seven 13-feet logs, the lumber of which was fit for the American market; and one stump which I measured I found it to be five feet, two inches across, not including the bark ... the yellow sand gives a much less yield of grain to the farmer. Where the dark loams have had a fair trial, the yield has been equal to the most favourable soils ... wheat, rye, oats, peas, barley and Indian corn all flourished; potatoes and other bulbous roots exceed the growth in older townships.

In answer to the other questions, he said:

[I do] not wish to be understood to say that all the area ... is fit for cultivation — there is too much broken land abounding through this district to suit me — but I wish to say that the township of Kaladar has a fair portion of excellent land; that of Barrie, Denbigh and Ashby will be, when cleared and tilled, equal in quality of soil and quantity of plough land in proportion to their area, after deducting the water, to either Camden or Earnestown. Anglesea, Abinger and Effingham are more broken. After you leave the head of the Massenoga Lake [Mazinaw], the road passes over a rough range of rocky ground, covered with fine groves of pine, interspersed with patches of hardwood land. These patches of hardwood land are sufficiently numbered to induce settlers to occupy probably the road line through this range.

Between 1857 and 1860, nearly £7,000 was voted for the Addington Road, and a good number of Irish and German immigrant families followed it from Kaladar to Barrie and Anglesea, and on through to Abinger and Denbigh; some of them, of course, stopping on the way. By 1859 Washington Mallory had a small sawmill operating in Abinger.

Others followed the Frontenac Road, for which nearly £10,000 was voted in the same period, and came by way of Hinchinbrooke through to Clarendon and Miller where the road met with the Mississippi Road. The latter started in North Sherbrooke, and then continued through Palmerston, Clarendon, Miller and Abinger where it joined at right angles with the Addington Road. The Darling and Lavant Road (£2,000 voted, as opposed to about £9,000 for the Mississippi between 1857 and 1860) was approximately seventeen miles in length from the south-west of Darling Township to the north-east of Palmerston where it joined up with the Mississippi Road.

Other roads intersected these — the Snow Road was, and is still in local memory, a favourite one — and for a few short years the new settlers were happy and got reasonable crops off their cleared lands. By about 1862, however, they began to be discouraged by crop failures which were, at first, attributed to frost, drought or untimely precipitation (a well-known local summer resident and writer, Merrill Denison, whose property on Mazinaw Lake was given to the province as Bon Echo Park, wrote a play, "The Weather Breeder," on this point). While 14 persons came to settle along the Addington Road in 1862, 45 moved away for good. The next year, 33 persons left, and the provincial Executive Council had placed before it:

A memorial from the Reeves and Deputy Reeves of the Counties of Lennox and Addington, stating that alarming destitution prevails among the Settlers residing in some of the Townships through which the Addington Road runs, owing to their crops having been almost entirely destroyed ... [so] that they are consequently reduced to the necessity of supporting life with no other food than turnips, and have no prospect of preparing their land for another harvest, being without money or seed grain.

There was little that could be done and in 1864 nobody could be induced to settle along either the Addington or the Frontenac Roads. That was virtually the end of the "colonization roads" program proper. The Report of the Ontario Clerk of Forestry at the turn of the century showed that time to all intents and purposes stood still for the next generation:

Although thirty years have elapsed since settlement began in earnest ... it is still ... very thin and scattered ... spots of arable soil are not numerous and are of very limited extent; very rarely can a level field of ten acres be found, and this good land is practically all taken up. The lumber industry, on which many of the settlers at one time depended to a great extent for work in winter, and for a market for their livestock and hay and vegetables, is now a thing of the past.

In 1861, Barrie Township (with Clarendon at that time) had 463 residents; in 1881, alone, it had 486; in 1911 (after a brief rise) it again had 486; in 1941, 451; and in 1961, 409. Abinger (for census purposes) shared with Ashby, Effingham and Denbigh in 1871, a population of 325; in 1891 the combined total was 870; in 1921 (then not including Effingham), it stood at 607; in 1941, at 837; and in 1961, at 701. Clarendon, as noted above, shared the combined population total of 463 with Barrie in 1861 and, in 1881, 685 with Miller Township. In 1911, still with the latter, Clarendon's total was 841; in 1931, it was down to 629; in 1951, to 576; and in 1961, to 557. Palmerston, with Canonto, went from 546 to 1871, to a brief boom at the turn of the century of 1,133; to 783 in 1921; 695 in 1941; and 384 in 1961.

Remaining residents now run small businesses, work with the Department of Lands and Forests, or with summer tourist-oriented enterprises, and in some cases continue to cultivate land and keep a little livestock, including rabbits sold to packaging firms.

The "colonization roads" program was, in many ways, merely an interlude in the Mississippi watershed's agricultural story, that had little in common with development in the eastern Mississippi townships. In this area, after 1850, there was, as a result of the improvements brought about by the agricultural societies and time, and apart from the other markets already noted, a good trade in livestock with dealers from the United States. In March, 1851, for instance, several hundred head of cattle (including one group of 500) were taken out by way of Smiths Falls. In October, 1852, at one of the fairs, dealers from Montreal, Bytown and Kingston bought up all the beef cattle that they could get, which was particularly noticeable because, as the Bathurst Courier reported, "there were no Americans on the ground, a very unusual occurrence" which, in turn, could be explained by low prices

in the States for cattle resulting from the scarcity of fodder. By 1856, local farmers were being urged to produce more cattle "to sell the Yankee drovers who are coming amongst us now-a-days with their cash," and in August and September of that year both horned cattle and horses were daily driven southwards and eastwards and, with sales averaging about £5 a head, some £30,000 worth were taken out of the area (including sections outside the Mississippi Authority of today). Some of the local promoters suggested that there was a capability "of exporting annually £100,000 worth of beef cattle," and that: "In horned cattle, sheep, pigs, horses, &c., this section of country stands without a rival."

After the ending of the American civil war and reciprocity in 1865, it was assumed locally that: "The free export of cattle [and] horses ... [which] has been of great benefit," would cease because of an inability "to compete with American produce" on the new terms. Nevertheless, cattle and horse dealers — "speculative geniuses" as they were known — continued to buy for some time, paying prices of \$150 and more per head for horses. Farmers in Dalhousie, Sherbrooke, Lanark and Bathurst particularly, were doubly pleased with the continued sales when, in the mid-1860s, the hay crop was "a complete failure" and then swarms of grasshoppers destroyed the pasturage, "eating up everything in the shape of hay and clover, and reducing fine meadows to fields destitute of even a blade of grass."

Thereafter the American market changed again as the United States settled its post-war problems and, at the same time, the shanty market got farther away. During the 1870s and early 1880s Lanark and Carleton farmers still were able to sell their hay, oats and pork to lumbermen, but had to go as far as Lake Temiskaming to do so. In 1876, a local farmer told a Commons Select Committee that:

The farmer here has a home market where he can dispose of his coarse grain to a better advantage than to use it for fattening cattle, on account of the large lumbering interest carried on here, except barley, for which they find a better market in the United States than at home.

Increasingly, however, dairying became important, and instructions to farmers on how to prepare their cheese and butter for market were common. One such circular, distributed in the 1860s, gave detailed information on salting:

A most essential point — the commonest qualities are often used, the globules of which are the size of pease [sic] when the very first qualities should invariably be preferred.... Ill-made Butter, besides selling at low prices, is subject to heavy loss in weight from the melting of the superabundant salt.

And on packaging:

Pack the several colors and quantities in separate packages, and in every case press it down closely, carefully guarding against having salt put between the layers.... The packages should be of seasoned white oak, white ash, or birch, well made, neat and clean, of uniform size, and

capable of holding 80 to 90 lbs. which are the weights generally preferred.

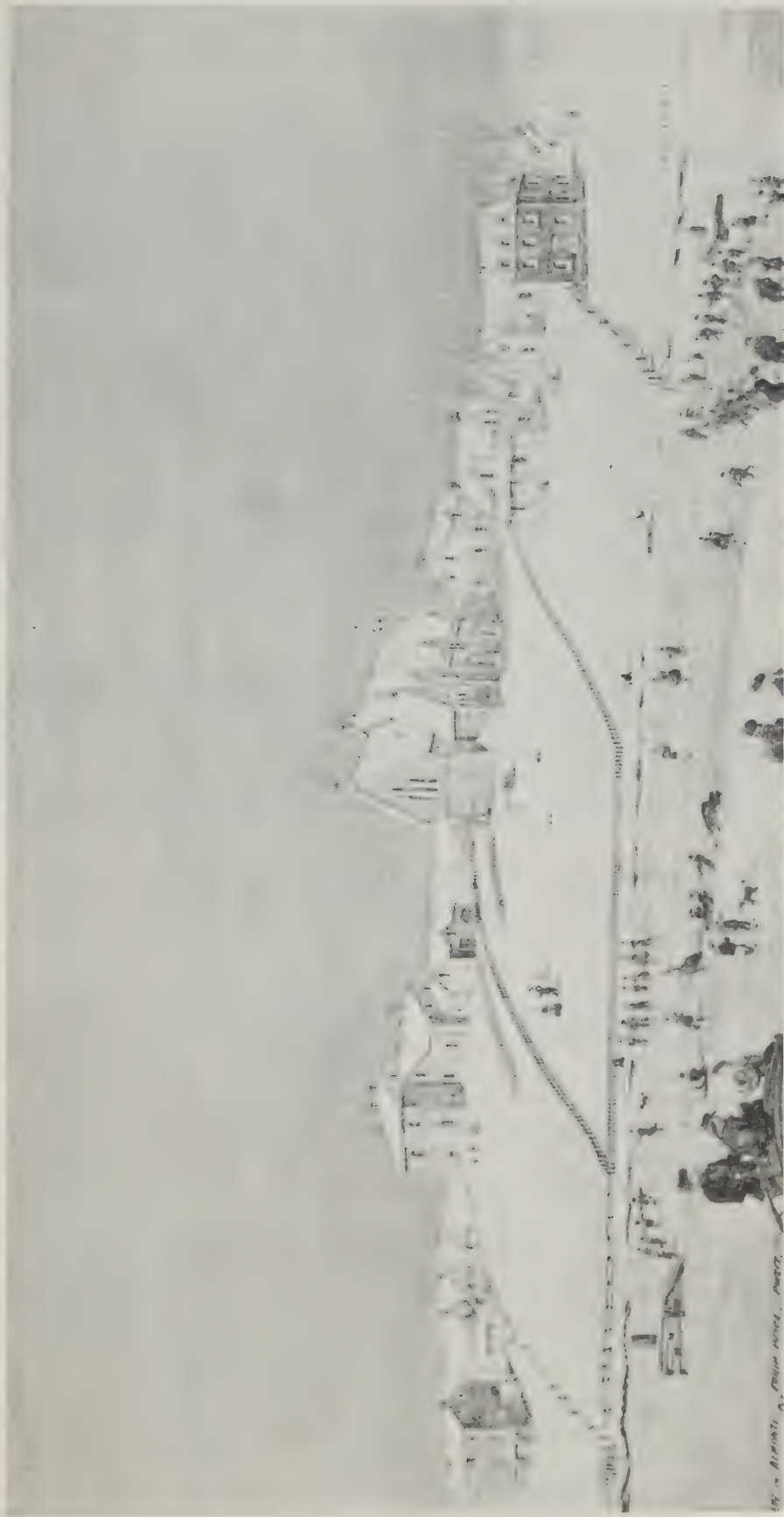
The butter was sold, through commission agents, in Montreal, the United States and, sometimes, in Britain, but farmers were as often as not quite unresponsive to instructions of the above kind; as a result, standards were anything but uniform until, in the 1880s, factories began to replace home manufacture. Cheese factories did so even earlier and, from the 1870s, hundreds were erected throughout the province. They, in turn, were replaced in the present century by larger and fewer firms. The new system, however, was considered an improvement by most farmers. One Lanark farmer told the Ontario Agricultural Commission that:

Dairying is more profitable than grain growing. The farm has improved.... We could hardly live on the farm previously.

There were a good many others who, if for different reasons, agreed with the final remark. After the ending of the war in the States, the trend became obvious, that, as the Perth Courier put it, "the great bulk of European emigration passes through Canada for settlement in the United States." The reason, the paper thought, was plain: "The Federal [U.S.] government gives [emigrants] free grants of prairie land ready for immediate cultivation," while in Canada they were "grudgingly" sold "patches of swamp and forest at high prices ... [so] that the public lands ... are now almost virtually abandoned to speculators." In October, 1865, the Courier told its readers of "over thirty fine young men, ... farmers' sons," who had "left here during the past week for settlement in some other country, and we hear of as many more who are preparing to follow their example immediately." This was so because they could not get "free grants from the public domain" and their fathers' farms could not support them. A year later the same newspaper complained further that: "Upwards of fifty families, besides a great number of single men, left this part of the country for the West ... [and] the Western States — there to take up land.... They all tell the same tale ... [of] their own farms exhausted and the impossibility of procuring land for their Sons."

The trek became even greater, especially after the opening up of Manitoba and then the prairies in the decades before and after the turn of the century. Many of the Mississippi farms were no longer considered fit for use, and populations shrank accordingly. Dalhousie, North Sherbrooke and Lavant, with 2,295 inhabitants in 1871, were down to 2,142 by 1891, to 1,502 by 1911, 1,211 by 1931, and, in 1961, Dalhousie and North Sherbrooke counted 869 residents. Darling had a population of 900 in 1861, 767 in 1881, 623 in 1911, 424 in 1931, and 325 in 1961. Pakenham, known for several generations as one of the better farming areas, went from 2,442 in 1861, to 2,284 in 1881, 1,872 in 1901, 1,518 in 1921, 1,277 in 1941, and 1,143 in 1961.

Elsewhere, the trend has been the same, with those townships nearer to Ottawa now gaining marginally as compared with the low point in population during the first half of the 20th century, but still having fewer residents than they had after the middle of the last century.



The water colour, "View in Almonte," by Philip Boyce, shows skaters on the Mississippi River in 1870.

Chapter 7

COMMUNICATIONS

The Mississippi valley needed communication lines as badly as any pioneer community had ever needed them. Much was done, but until Carleton Place became the junction for two of the CPR railway lines in later years, the people of the watershed never quite lost the feeling that they were always two steps behind other parts of the province in their communication routes with the world beyond their own boundaries.

Over the years they blamed nature, authorities and themselves for this state of affairs. For instance, the Clyde River, they said, was appropriately named because the Celtic word means "winding river." So far off a straight line would one have to go to cross it that, even in the 1830s, it was found necessary to put four bridges across it within the space of three miles in the vicinity of Lanark village. Then the "rocky hillocks, rocks and swamps" that covered much of the area made roads dubious to say the least. The poor devils of these back settlements," went a letter to the Bathurst Courier in 1835, have "to pay their just proportion of the [roads assessment, and] some little attention should be paid to their comfort and accomodation [sic]."

When repeated demands to the Legislature, by way of the local member, did result in improvement grants, the general reaction was: "about time." In 1845, for example, when the "prosperous state of the Revenue ... enabled the Legislature to appropriate ... money for public improvements," £2,000 was granted for roads surveys, including one survey from Perth to Beckwith and through Ramsay, via Clayton (then Bellamy's Mills), and on to Pembroke. The feeling was that:

This is an act of justice for which we desire to give the administration due credit, at the same time we know that ... the they were only fulfilling a pledge which the Government was under.

The Perth-Pembroke road was planned at 40 feet wide and largely followed the "present travelled road," such as it was, and was regarded as a great advance. Other roads, however, continued to be regarded as abominable, and one writer suggested that one had only to spend an hour on the road which ran between Drummond and Bathurst "to have all their senses duly satisfied of the necessity of some improvement being made." Some thought that the pioneer roads of 1818-21 could be more easily travelled, as they at least had an underlay of roots and logs which was better than nothing.

Comfort, of course, was only one aspect. More to the point were accessibility and ensuing development. In 1849, Colonel Andrew Playfair who, as was previously noted, was one of those most concerned with improvements, headed a Bathurst District special committee which petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor to allow the "new road leading from the Boundary line of the Township of Dalhousie to the Madawaska River" to be used for bringing in new settlers who, in turn, would maintain the road. It was, said the committee, of "great importance ... being the most Western route to the great Lumbering country ... and thereby opening a short communication and outlet for surplus produce," and they suggested that the matter be attended to without loss of time. Their petition read, in part:

The said road is through a most broken and rocky country — hitherto said to be impassable on account of rocks and swamps, but a route has been obtained — and there is only one solitary settler on the whole way being seventeen miles — that there are a few spots of hard land which most probably will be taken up by squatters who will cut off the timber for Potash without erecting any buildings or fences — your memorialists therefore beg your Excellency and Council will be pleased to grant to each and every settler (being a married man) one Hundred acres or less of Land on and within two concessions of the said road ... which will be of the utmost importance in keeping open this most desirable communication between the District Town of Perth and the Lands in rear of the District line and be of great service in selling the same.

That was as good a statement as any of what "colonization roads" were all about and, of course, Colonel Playfair did not have to wait too many years for this course to be tried on the grand scale.

In the late 1840s and 1850s it was decided that plank roads, which were then much in vogue in the United States, would cure many of the ills inherent in corduroy roads (formed of loose-fitting tree trunks). One estimate of the cost of a plank road between Perth and Lanark was £3,600 for plank, sleepers and labour. The method of financing such a road was to sell shares at the equivalent value of about \$5 to \$50. On this particular stretch, a sawmill owner offered to take £300 of shares "to be paid in plank, and would engage to deliver it during the winter at any place along the line of road." There was plenty of support after the District Surveyor's report of November, 1849, stated that: "roads through the District ... are almost impassable." Within a week the local press reported that: "Schemes for our prosperity are rife, and Joint Stock Companies and Plank Roads are in every one's mouth ... the idea has taken hold of many public spirited men in our community and plank roads we shall have [emphases original] ."

There were meetings at Balderson for a road "from the Mississippi to the Rideau Ferry," and at Carleton Place for "a Plank, Macadamized or Gravelled Road, from Carlton [sic] Place to some point on the Ottawa River, or Rideau Canal, whereby the inhabitants, of this part of the Country, could have free access to a market, at all seasons of the year." Colonel Playfair took the opportunity of pressing his view by suggesting that three companies were necessary "on account of the conflicting interest: one for the Balderson road — one for Lanark — and one for the western route."

Enthusiasm was one thing, transforming it into road building another; but by 1853 the Drummond and Bathurst and the Lanark and Drummond roads were completed, connecting Lanark and Balderson with Perth, with Gillies providing much of the planking at \$12 per 1,000 board feet. The roads' popularity waned in a matter of years, however, and in 1856 a number of people were brought before the courts for refusing to pay toll charges when the roads were "next thing to impassable" in the winter. "To pay toll on a good road," it was generally agreed, "very few people object; but to be compelled to pay on a very bad road, is rather a hard case." Nevertheless, for lack of an alternative, plank roads continued to be projected, generally over small distances as, in 1857, between Playfair and Balderson.

The next step was the macadam road, using a technique which had been known for 50 years: layers of small stones were cemented together with a mixture of stone dust and water. With the substitution of tar, the method has, of course, been used to the present day. It was first tried on the Lanark and Drummond road in 1862, after the road rights were bought by George Kerr of Perth. Between Lanark and Balderson there was a large swamp which became a lake each spring when the Mississippi overflowed, "seriously injuring [the section] by washing away the loose earth forming its foundation." But Kerr's efforts at grading and rounding the road and laying it on "a most substantial bed of large boulders" above the high water mark, effectively reduced its reputation as "the terror of travellers."

The roads did succeed in improving communications. In 1856 it was said to be "beyond dispute" that travel between Lanark and Perth "has increased a hundred per cent since that road was made." Perhaps because of that, local inhabitants were then more conscious than ever that: "This section of country has been as effectually hemmed in — as effectually debarred from communication with commercial world as if it had been surrounded with the Chinese wall." With Colonel Playfair pushing hard, it came to be considered as self-evident that: "If we wish to drive a good export trade, the farmers must have easy access to the place of shipment":

Playfair had very definite feelings on that matter and, in September, 1856, he succeeded in having a large "Road Meeting" endorse a resolution that:

It is absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the County of Lanark, that we, the inhabitants ... do forthwith use every constitutional means to obtain roads to the West, and North-West, with a free grant of Land to actual settlers, similar to the 'Addington', 'Hastings', and the 'Ottawa and Opeongo' Roads.

Within a matter of weeks a favourable response was received to a petition to the Governor in Toronto for the road "from the Mississippi River in Bathurst, thence in a North-Westerly direction, to intersect the Hastings Road North." The survey was started the following summer.

Although, as has been seen, the "colonization roads" program was hardly a success along the lines envisaged for it, the inhabitants of the eastern Mississippi townships had few complaints about the gains that it brought to them. At the time of Confederation, the Lavant Road, connecting with the Lanark and Snow Roads, was considered a great success, providing as it did communication to the west and north of Renfrew. Farmers as far west as Palmerston were then able to bring their produce to Lanark Village and Perth by a more convenient road than that which went by way of McDonalds Corners in Dalhousie. The Lavant Road was, said the Perth Courier in October, 1866, "an evidence of progress in the right direction," and "those acquainted with the hilly and rocky section of country through which it passes," would recognize that "considerable engineering skill has been exhibited in its construction."

Colonel Playfair was not one to be content simply with roads. In the late 1840s he also had schemes for a canal between the Mississippi and the Rideau, and for a railway to Georgian Bay to link up with American networks.

The former idea was taken up in the 1850s by the Cockburn Creek Navigation Company which proposed:

To cut a small Canal from the Mississippi Lake to the head of the Creek, of sufficient depth to float Saw Logs, which will not be below the natural Summer Level of the Lake — to straighten and deepen the Creek where necessary — and build Dams, Slides, &c., at such points along the line as may be required to facilitate the transmission of Lumber from the Mississippi to the Rideau.

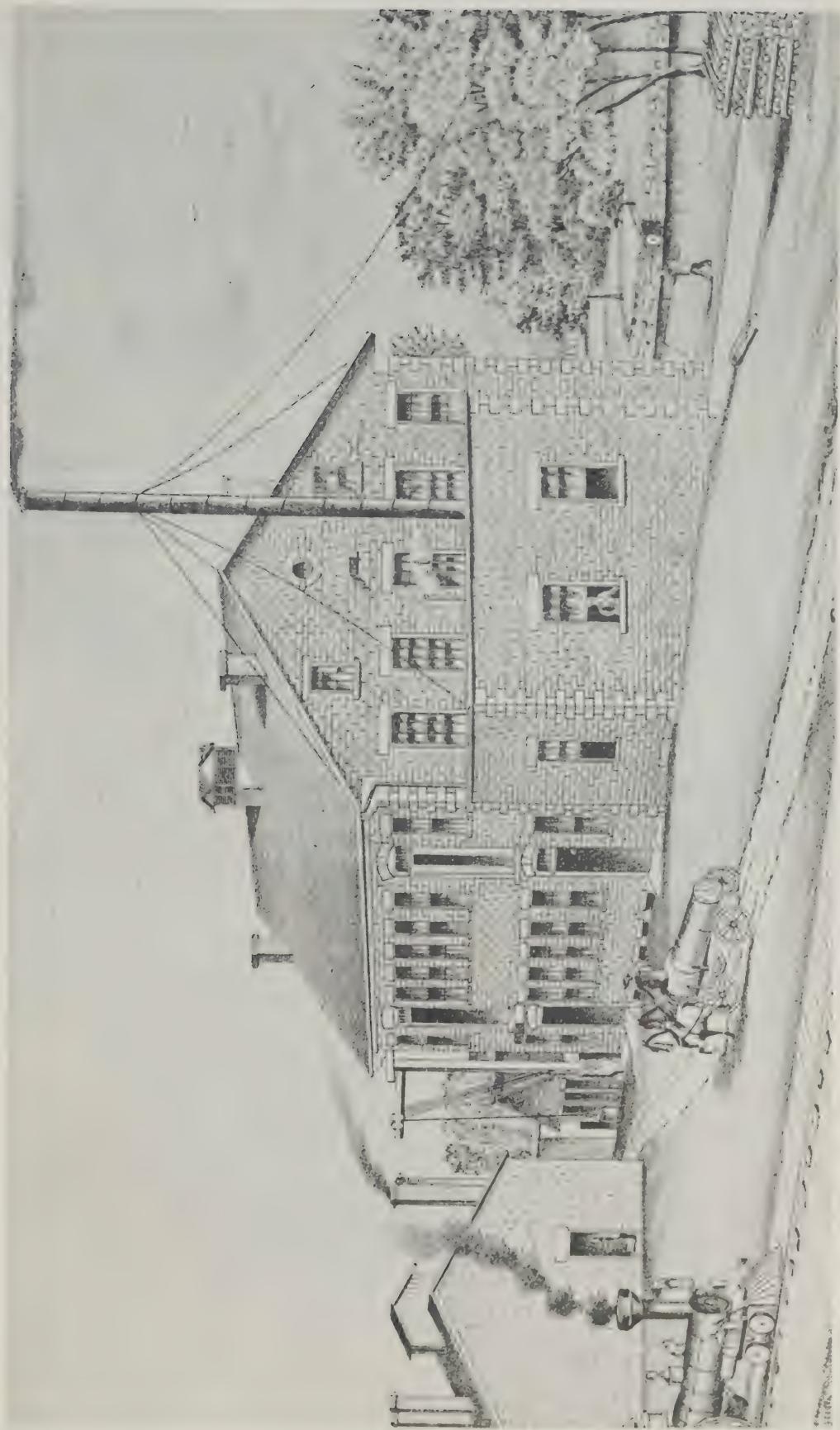
In the summer of 1854, the Lanark County Council submitted the matter to a special committee which was not at all taken with the idea. In the first place, a recent parliamentary act forbade the forming of companies for directing the waters of one river into another. In the second, the Mississippi Lake would be reduced below its natural level and the increase in flow of Cockburn Creek would drown considerable stretches of land in Drummond, Beckwith, and elsewhere. Although these lands were usually flooded in spring, they were drained by Cockburn Creek in its natural state by summer, and left "available for pasture and Meadow." These lands would be "rendered useless to the injury and loss of the proprietors thereof," by any Cockburn Creek canal, and the committee had consequently been "induce [d]... to believe that the injuries sustained will be greater than the benefits conferred." There the matter rested.

Railways were an altogether different matter. In the 1850s the railway fever and the municipal loan fund scheme together excited local dreams of prosperity which, as in other parts of the province, were eventually accepted as being impossible to realize. The valley had its railway supporters from the beginning: from Colonel Playfair who, in 1850, took a "good spy-glass" and climbed trees to view routes he planned to overcome "the chain of mountains" that form High Falls, to Robert Bell of Carleton Place, and Andrew Dickson of Pakenham.

A good deal of progress was made in the early 1850s on the Brockville and Ottawa Railway which was intended to extend upwards from Almonte to link with Arnprior and Pembroke, a major lumbering centre. The costs, however, were formidable, at about \$10,000 a mile, and by 1855 it was recognized that the railway was "stuck." Although it reached Almonte by the late 1850s, it took the next four decades for the optimistic plans of the early years to be even approached and, by that time, the country's situation was quite changed.

The Canada Central joined Ottawa to Carleton Place and extended south to Brockville in 1870. The Brockville and Ottawa line reached Pembroke in 1875 and then Callander as part of the Canada Central line before being integrated into the Canadian Pacific network in the early 1880s. In the meantime, the Kingston and Pembroke Railway ran a line into Lanark, but it was not until the mid-1890s that the route through from Arnprior to Georgian Bay was completed, by which time the initial impetus had been replaced by the post — Confederation scheme of things.

Both Carleton Place and Almonte did well by the railway. In 1863, when the railway to Almonte was only a few years old, a well-known commentator, E. L. Snow, wrote in the Montreal Gazette that the village "reveale [d] astonishing growth and progress." Twelve months prior, some



This drawing, published in 1880, shows the Central Canada Machine Works, Gillies and Beyer, at Carleton Place.

twenty-five buildings, including a woollen factory, had been erected, and much more was promised. The next year, The Globe described Almonte as an "ambitious little city ... a mixture of mills, waterfalls, dirty streets and energetic merchants, who are always selling at a 'tremendous sacrifice' every place but in their places of business." By the 1880s it had 65 stores of various kinds, three sawmills, three large woollen mills, two large grist mills, two good-sized machine shops, two cabinet factories, two planing factories, and such other enterprises as wagon and carriage and boat-building shops. It also had a large grain and livestock market, and a slaughtering and packing house whose products were easily transported by rail. However, with the 'boom' areas elsewhere in the province and country, Almonte was not able to maintain the growth that promised, in those years, to make it a major manufacturing town. In 1881 it had the relatively large population of 2,684 but there it virtually stopped with 3,068 in 1891, 3,023 at the turn of the century, 2,452 in 1911, 2,415 twenty years later, 2,672 in 1951, and 3,267 in 1961.

As the focal point for several railway routes, Carleton Place was better situated. It, too, became known as a manufacturing centre after 1870, particularly with the building in 1875 of Gillies' Central Canada Machine Works which produced heavy machinery for railways and mills. The town also had a large five-storey woollen mill — which in the 1880s was known as its "most prominent feature" — and other enterprises, including a stove factory. In more recent times, electronics and computer firms have located here. Carleton Place has maintained a population growth since its incorporation as a village in 1871. In that year it had 1,205 residents; in 1881, 1,975; in 1891, 4,435; in 1911, 3,621; in 1931, 4,105; in 1951, 4,725; and in 1961, 4,796.

Lanark village did not have the railway advantages of Almonte and Carleton Place, so that its population has remained virtually unchanged since 1871. From 740, it increased by only a dozen to 752 in 1881; in the next 20 years it did rise, first to 859 in 1891 and then to 979 in 1901; but in 1911 it was back down to 737 and decreased even further, to 597 in 1921. In 1941, it was up slightly to 663, in 1951 to 791, and in 1961 to 918.

Chapter 8

WOOLLEN MILLS

With great quantities of water power on hand, extensive areas suitable for grazing sheep but not much else, and large numbers of original inhabitants who had once been Scottish weavers, the Mississippi was well suited to the production of woollen goods. James Rosamond was the valley's pioneer and his first efforts at producing wool on a commercial basis were started at Carleton Place in 1830.

By the 1840s his "manufacturing, carding and dressing" business was superior to any woollen mill in the District of Bathurst, which extended beyond the bounds of today's Mississippi Conservation Authority. Furthermore, in 1845-46, when Rosamond added a "new very superior CARDING MACHINE, and also Machinery both for SPINNING and WEAVING," he claimed that he was "not surpassed by any other establishment of the kind in the country." He received wool from local farmers and processed it by the yard and by shares, employing "none but experienced and steady hands," and sold his finished product both for cash and "all kinds of country produce."

Other areas had carding, fulling and cloth dressing establishments. One at Pakenham, for instance, was described as "very extensive and superior," as was Hanna and Lambie's in the second concession of Lanark on the Clyde. But none rivalled Rosamond's at this time. In 1848 he added two power looms, and the Bathurst Courier, convinced that he "deserves encouragement for his enterprise," suggested that "farmers generally will see that it is their interest to give him their custom, and thus 'encourage Home Manufacturers.' "

As an innovator, Rosamond apparently suffered some abuse from "interested persons" as he called them who claimed: "Cloth manufactured by Machinery does not give satisfaction." Whatever the truth of that opinion, Rosamond prospered and his penchant for advertising brought in the crowds. One such advertisement, circulated in May, 1848, was preceded by the exhortation: "Farmers, Encourage Home Manufacture." This became his standard introduction to advertising which read as follows:

The Subscriber would inform the Inhabitants of the
Bathurst and adjoining Districts, that he has his

WOOLEN [sic] FACTORY

In complete operation, and is manufacturing different
varieties of Cloth by the yard, viz., Cassimeres, plain
and fancy Flannels, Sattinets, Blankets, &c. &c.

He has on hand a considerable quantity of the above
Kind of Cloth, which he will exchange for good clean Wool
in the Fleece.

Custom Carding and Cloth Dressing done to order
as usual — most Kinds of Farm Produce taken in payment.

In 1850, by which time his business had taken the name Victoria
Woolen [sic] Factory, Rosamond again enlarged and improved his premises

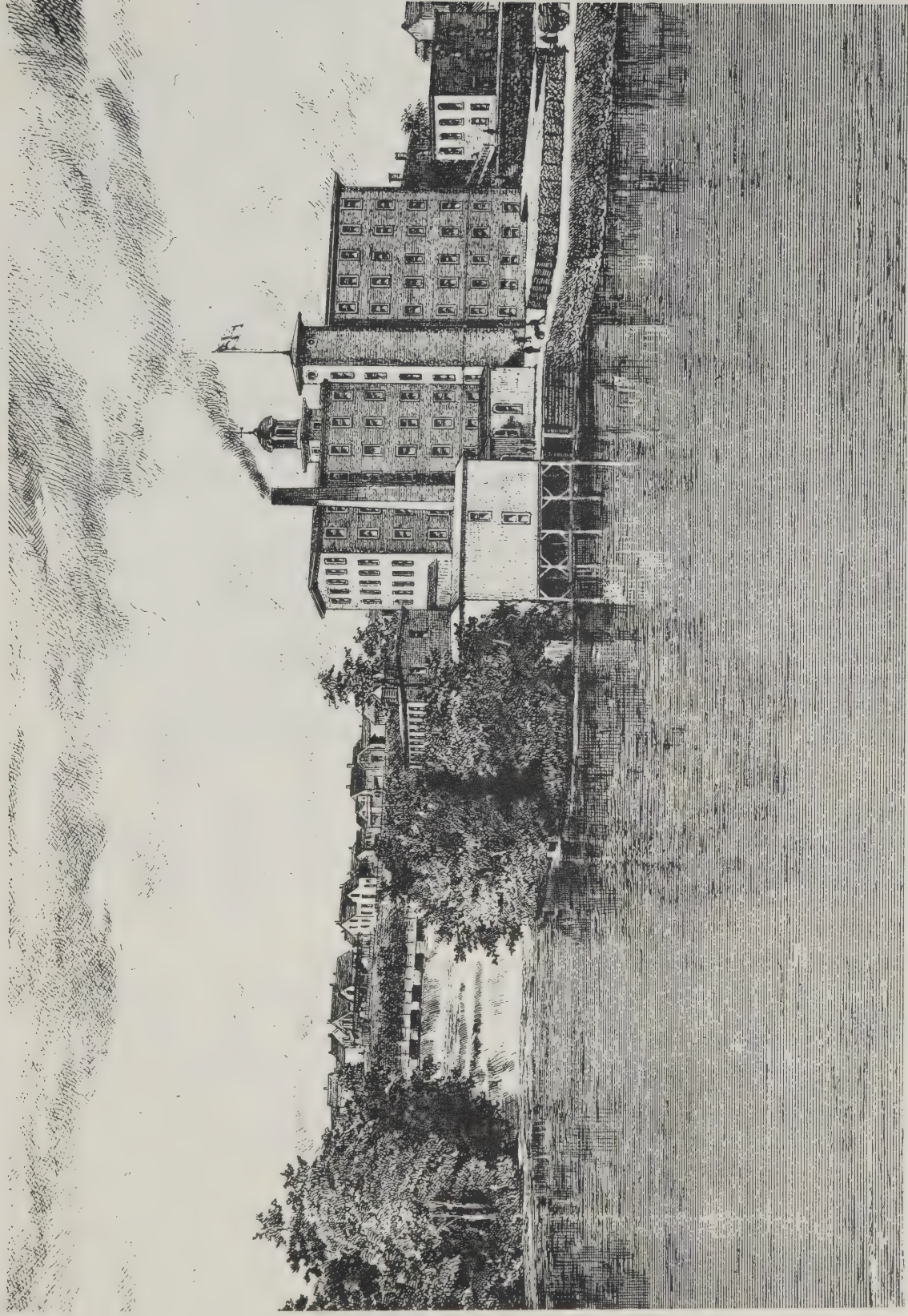
which, he claimed, would enable him to manufacture Cloth seven or eight per cent cheaper than formerly," and he added "Tartans, Plaids, Doeskins, Tweeds, Blankets, a superior article, full width [emphases original]," to his line of available goods.

So extensive were his operations by the mid-1850s, that there was alarm in Perth, traditionally the district's focal point, at the "large quantities of wool ... taken from Perth to Carleton Place" where it was made into cloth and "brought back and sold in Perth." The trade, it was felt, should be the other way around. The editor of the Bathurst Courier, considering himself something of an expert because he had "visited some of the best factories in the State of New York," went to view this phenomenon. Rosamond's he found, was "equal to any of them ... although not on so extensive a scale," and his manufactured articles quite extraordinary. His blankets were "without exception, the best that I have seen," and his cloths "will stand a comparison with any manufactured in this country, or probably in this continent."

In the late 1850s the Rosamond family operations were moved to Almonte. There they made further improvements to their processing methods and E. L. Snow, in his articles for the Montreal Gazette already noted, wrote that "they manufacture an excellent article of woollen tweeds, which finds a ready sale in Montreal ... [and has] the reputation of excellent quality." By the time of Confederation, when the railway link with the outside world had been established for some years, Almonte was said to owe to the Rosamonds "the leading feature of its prosperity, [and] its stand amidst the leading prosperous towns on this continent." To an outside observer, their woollen goods were "the choice of dealers the world over." In 1867 the Rosamonds' had two woollen factories producing approximately 300,000 pounds of finished goods annually, and they employed 90 persons to whom they paid a total of \$1,600 monthly. In that year they also started to build larger premises at a cost of \$100,000 with a "twelve set capacity — ...double the capacity of the mill of Barber Brothers of Streetsville, which is the largest now in Canada," able to produce 2,000 yards of cloth a day and requiring 200 workers to run it.

In 1866, Boyd Caldwell converted into a woollen factory a stone building that had formerly been a store owned by competitors, the Mairs, who moved most of their business to Perth. The same year, Teskey's woollen factory at Appleton was enlarged and by the '80s, William Wylie's large factory at Carleton Place was the town's "most prominent feature," producing 3,000 yards of finished cloth a week. Indeed, by then, the production of woollen textiles had become one of the Mississippi Valley's main supports.

With the introduction of synthetic textiles in recent years, the trade has suffered a comparative decline; but still, the manufacturer of both woollens and cottons continues successfully today.



This illustration, dated 1877, is of the "Rosamond Woolen Company's Mills" at Almonte.

Chapter 9

MINERALS, MINES AND QUARRIES

It required little more than a generation after the first settlement for the heady conclusion to be reached that in the rocks of the Precambrian Shield there lay a vast potential treasure house. In earlier years there had been the excitement of the exploitable iron ore at Marmora, but it was the discovery in 1840 of iron ore in the region of Christie Lake in South Sherbrooke that really brought the possibilities close, so to speak, to the area's doorstep. In March of that year the local press reported that:

The value of the ore is proved to be equal to 80 per cent, and we learn with much pleasure that the result generally is so fair and promising that some of our ablest capitalists are about to engage in the undertaking at no distant period.

A Mr. Kingston, who also worked a lead mine farther south in Bedford, examined the vein and there was talk of an English company becoming involved. But although some ore was mined and refined, the discovery of similar pockets in other townships caused interest to wane, particularly as there were much more readily exploitable resources in the forest timber.

Ten years later, the California gold rush brought some renewed interest, and the Bathurst Courier excitedly reported that gold particles had been discovered in Bathurst, which went "far to prove," in the editor's opinion, "that in our own vicinity there must be a bed of it." In Dalhousie township, too, somebody had discovered "what is believed to be a silver mine." It was, somewhat enigmatically, said to have been "found in the rock." Local residents were advised to keep their eyes open, as there was "no saying what closer investigation may do in the way of creating an antidote to the California 'fever' now raging so intensely."

Four years later the subject of the South Sherbrooke iron vein "so rich that it yields 80 per cent of pure metal" — was brought up again and it was suggested that it would now pay "to start an extensive establishment for smelting this ore." Economical means of getting the ore out, however, were apparently lacking.

In 1862, samples taken from Bathurst, Ramsay and Pakenham were exhibited in a "Collection of the Economic Minerals of Canada and of its Crystalline Rocks" at the London International Exhibition, and the townships were "represented as rich in mineral wealth." Whether or not this provided the spur is not known, but two years later the tentative operations of British and American companies were said to be "seen everywhere" in Lanark County, and the "mineral wealth of this section" to be "getting more and more developed every day." Some fifty tons of ore were taken to Cleveland that year for testing, and the results were favourable.

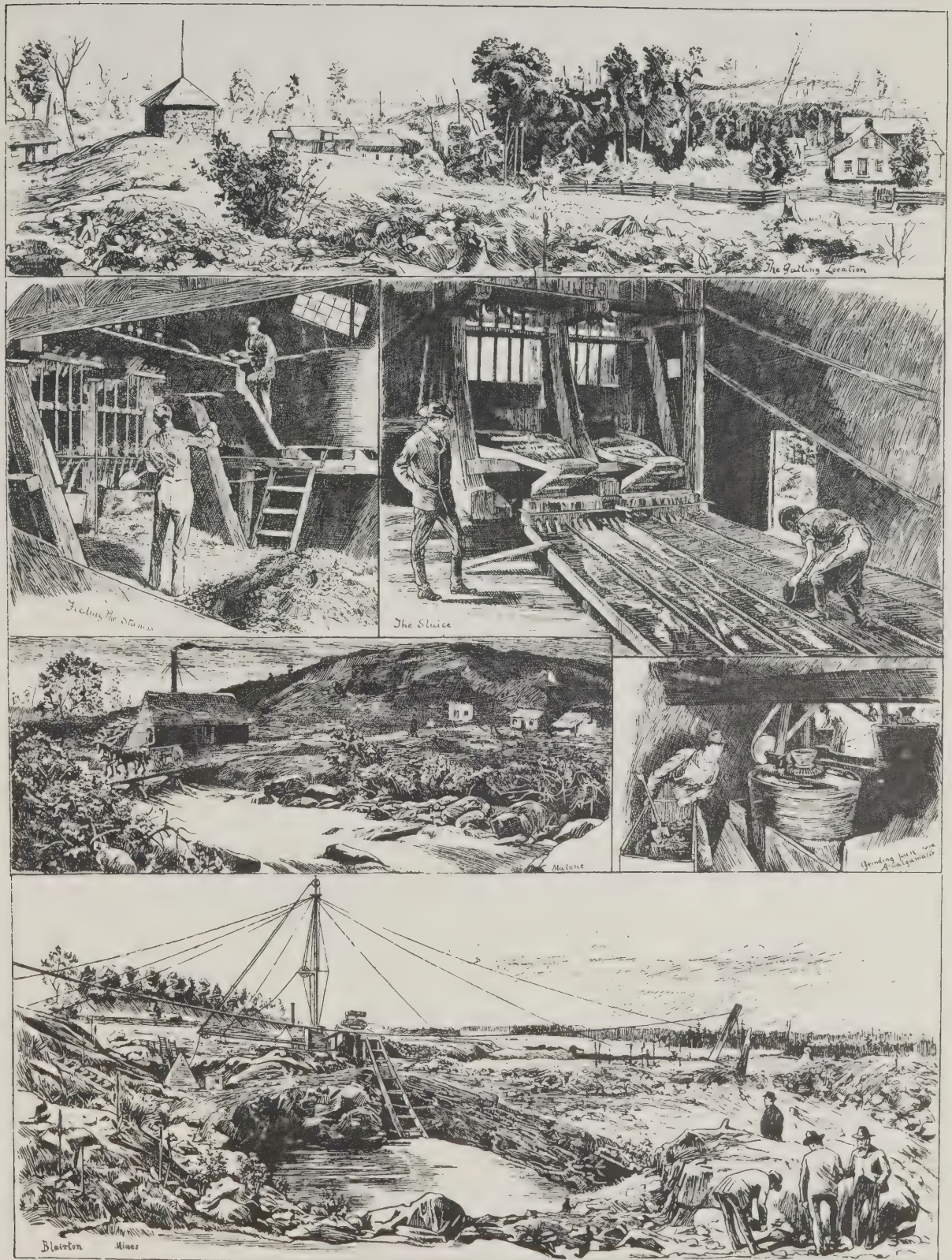
Local enterprise was, however, not to be had: it was complained in Perth "our own moneyed men, as a general thing, prefer spending their spare means on ten per cent mortgages, to undertaking the development of the mineral resources of the locality"; hence, "were it not for the enterprise of parties from the United States, the mines of Lanark might forever lie untouched by the hand of industry."

By 1866, such prospecting as had been done showed that there were "large quantities" of apatite (phosphate of lime) extending towards South Sherbrooke and Bathurst. There were also "immense deposits" of iron ore "of great thickness and various qualities," in those two townships. Dalhousie had an "immense" deposit, approximately twenty feet in width, of red hematite iron. Near Lanark village galena ore, containing lead sulphide and silver, and in the township plumbago, graphite or black lead had been found. Through Lavant and Darling "a very large deposit of copper bearing rocks" had been discovered, and it was thought that "some day" the area would "rival any other copper producing section of Canada." Near Carleton Place, too, there was a lead mine, already producing and considered "valuable," and "paying quantities" of iron, mica, lead, copper and apatite had been taken out of Lavant. In Ramsay, an extensive lead mine had been operated for a time in the 1860s, but for some "unaccountable" reason it had closed by 1866.

In 1867 it was thought that Lanark would become a 'gold rush' area when some small quantities of the metal were discovered. That, however, proved if anything an even more fleeting experience than the brief but memorable 'gold rush' interlude in the Kaladar area at the turn of the century. Instead, the Mississippi district had to be chiefly content with the subsequent development of a number of small iron mines. In 1871, the Dalhousie Iron Mine produced about 2,500 tons of ore which were shipped by way of Perth and Brockville to Cleveland. Another mine, in Lavant, had a production of approximately fifty tons a day by the early 1880s, but the profits were small as half the selling cost in the United States was spent on transportation. Iron ore was also brought through Lanark from the areas just north of the village, and quantities were exported to Cleveland from mines in Palmerston. With the ore worth two dollars or so a ton at the mine, the annual output measured only in tens of thousands of tons, the mines fell victim to general depression in North America and to the restrictive iron tariffs that the United States imposed after 1883. When the trade revived in the 20th century, the main mining areas were to the north and west, and only small-scale operations have since been carried on in south-eastern Ontario by mining companies.

Less exalted endeavours have been relatively more successful. One of the first was the Mount Blow lime kiln, started by Andrew Paul, son-in-law of Alexander Yuill, and described by Jean McGill in her "A Pioneer History of the County of Lanark." Paul, located between Carleton Place and Almonte, shipped his manufactured lime to be used in building, to places in and beyond the boundaries of today's Mississippi Conservation Authority. By 1866 he had a dozen or so black iron stone kilns on his property, and reached a top production of 9,000 bushels of processed lime in 1885; the next year he received a bronze medal for a sample of lime presented at an exhibition in London.

Later, a comparable venture was undertaken by the Kingdon lead mine in Fitzroy which sent its ore to Kingston for smelting from the time that it was formed in 1884 until the last years of the century. In 1915, the mine opened again for a period of only 16 years, but in this time it extracted more than 130,000,000 pounds of lead concentrates and pig lead. The mine closed in 1931 because markets for lead had practically ceased to exist.



The Canadian Illustrated News reproduced these early phases of gold mining in Upper Canada in 1880.

At periodic intervals throughout the 19th century, the possibilities were publicly discussed of selling marble from the Mississippi area both in and outside Canada. There was little reaction within the region of the watershed itself, although just outside, at Arnprior, marble was cut and shipped as far as the British Isles in sizeable loads and, in fact, a specimen was exhibited at the great Exhibition of 1862 in London. Surprisingly, one of the more serious plans to open marble quarries was made by a Horatio Yates who, in 1850, believed that he had found "a good quality of marble" in what was then wild land north of Barrie township and "four or five miles east of Lake Mazanaga [Mazinaw]." Because it would require "a large expenditure of labour and capital to develop it," he requested the Commissioner's of Crown Lands "protect[ion] in the undertaking" and, on this hopeful note, his plan apparently foundered.

Marble from the watershed has, however, come to Queen's Park in Toronto nearly 150 years later. Some 55,000 square feet of variegated buff and pink marble, quarried at Tatlock in Darling Township by Omega Marble Ltd., who have a four-acre open pit operation over beds of marble of still undetermined depth, became in 1969 flooring for the Macdonald Block, the central structure of the new provincial government complex in Toronto.



